"THE CLIENT"

JA1

REVISED DRAFT
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THE CLIENT

FADE IN:

CUTS OF MEMPHIS

Elvis statues, depressed city life. It's summer. It's hot. You could fry eggs on the sidewalk. A DJ's TWANG FADES IN AND OUT.

CUTS OF "TUCKER WHEEL ESTATES" TRAILER PARK - MORNING

Sad. Funky. CAMERA FINDS a rusted trailer.

INT. SWAYS' TRAILER - CLOSE ON DEPARTMENT STORE PORTRAIT

of two boys (Mark and Ricky Sway) at seven and five. RADIO DRONES.

CLOSE ON MARK SWAY

Now eleven. Street-wise. Eyes searching. An adult female figure busily pops IN AND OUT OF FRAME. It is DIANNE SWAY, Mark's young, fragmented mother. At twenty-seven, she already looks somehow faded, she knows the best part of her life is behind her.

HIS POV

Her open purse, cigarette package showing.

MARK

never takes his eyes off the purse.

DIANNE
... and don't let Ricky read those scary comics... he can't sleep.

As she disappears for a second into the tiny bathroom of their tiny trailer, Mark moves at the speed of sound and pilfers four cigarettes from her pack. He leaps back as she comes out of the bathroom.

DIANNE
You hear what I'm sayin'? Shoot, I'm gonna be late for work again.

She hasn't caught him. But suddenly Mark sees who has. RICKY, his nine-year-old brother, was watching him. Busted.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - LATER

Mark walks away from the seedy park as Ricky tags along. They climb over a fence and head into a wild wooded area.

MARK
You know the rules.

RICKY
Yeah, if I tell anyone, you'll beat me up.

MARK
That's right.

RICKY
And I can smoke only one a day.

MARK
That's right. If I catch you smoking more than that, then you're in trouble. And if I find out you're drinking beer or messing with drugs, then --

RICKY
I know, I know. You'll beat me up again.

MARK
Right.

RICKY
How many do you smoke a day?

MARK
Only one.

RICKY
Will one a day kill me?

MARK
Not anytime soon. One a day is pretty safe. More than that, and you could be in trouble.

RICKY
How many does Mom smoke a day?

MARK
Two packs.

RICKY
How many is that?

MARK
Forty.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICKY
Wow. Then she's in big trouble.

MARK
Mom's got all kinds of troubles. I don't think she's worried about cigarettes.

RICKY
How many does Dad smoke a day?

MARK
Four or five packs. A hundred a day.

RICKY
Then he's gonna die soon, right?

They move deeper and deeper into the woods, chest high in weeds. They approach a tree with a long rope hanging from a branch, and a stump situated close by.

MARK
Sit there.

Mark smiles, puts the cigarette in his mouth, flicks a lighter before Ricky's eyes, and lights the cigarette.

MARK
Don't try to swallow the smoke. You're not ready for that yet. Just suck a little then blow the smoke out.

RICKY
Okay.

Ricky eases the wet filter to his lips. His hand shakes, and he takes a couple short drags. Success. He smiles.

RICKY
It's easy.

MARK
No big deal.

RICKY
Tastes kind of funny. This is fun.

MARK
So why are your hands shaking?

CONTINUED:

RICKY
They're not.

Then Ricky hears something. A LOW, RUSHING sound comes from a dirt road nearby.

MARK
(whispering)
Just sit still.

A shiny, brand-new LINCOLN, driven at high speed, comes bouncing and banging down the overgrown dirt road and ROARS into the clearing.

Both boys throw themselves flat on their bellies as the Lincoln's ENGINE STOPS and suddenly the driver's door kicks open. The driver steps out, into the weeds. He is a chubby, bearded man in a black suit, with a wild look in his eyes. He is crying, mumbling, and holds a bottle of whiskey.

Mark watches the man stumble to the rear of the car, fumble with the keys, and open the trunk. He removes a water hose, and sticks one end into the exhaust pipe.

RICKY
What's he doing?

MARK
Shhhh!

The man (JEROME CLIFFORD) runs the other end of the hose through a crack in the left rear window and crawls back into the car.

MARK
(whispering)
Jesus Christ... He's trying to kill himself!

RICKY
How do you know?

MARK
I saw this in a movie once.

RICKY
Why does he want to kill himself?

MARK
How am I supposed to know? We've gotta do something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICKY
Yeah, let's get the hell outa here!

MARK
No! Just be still a minute.

RICKY
How long does it take?

MARK
Not very long.

Mark grabs Ricky by the shoulder.

MARK
You stay here, okay. If you move, I'll kick your ass.

RICKY
What are you doing?

MARK
Just stay here! I mean it!

Mark begins to crawl through the weeds, towards the car. Ricky watches Mark slither away from him. Mark inches his way to the car, taking care not to create too much movement in the weeds. He slides on his belly until he is in the shadow of the trunk. He reaches up to the exhaust pipe, easily dislodges the hose, and lets it drop to the ground. Mark smiles, and retraces his trail with a bit more speed. Ricky watches Mark make it back to their hiding place. Mark leaps in, and crouches next to Ricky.

RICKY
Let's go!

MARK
No, let's stay and make sure he's okay.

There seems to be no movement coming from the car. The ENGINE continues to IDLE.

RICKY
You think he's dead?

MARK
I don't know.

Suddenly, the door is kicked open again, and Clifford leaps out. The boys watch him swagger.

CONTINUED:

Clifford, crying and stumbling, stops, and sees the dislodged water hose.

CLIFFORD
Jesus...

He bends down, and shoves the hose back into the tail pipe, then gets back in the car.

MARK
He's crazy as hell.

RICKY
Let's get out of here.

MARK
We can't. If he kills himself, and we saw it or knew about it, then we could get in all kinds of trouble.

RICKY
Then we won't tell anyone!

MARK
Just stay down. We're not leaving until I say we're leaving!

Ricky closes his eyes, and tries not to start crying. Mark is on his hands and knees again, deep in the weeds and heading towards the car.

RICKY
(crying)
Just let him die, Mark.

INT. JEROME CLIFFORD'S BLACK LINCOLN CONTINENTAL

Clifford inhales and exhales strongly. His nostrils flare. Tears stream from his eyes. A half-empty bottle of Jack Daniels is clutched in his loose hand. A pistol lies on the seat next to him, pills scattered everywhere. Clifford sighs. He takes the bottle, unscrews the cap, and gulps, glancing in the rearview mirror.

HIS POV - THROUGH MIRROR

The weeds move behind his car.

EXT. UNDERNEATH BLACK LINCOLN

Mark lies in the shadow of the black Lincoln, and is about to dislodge the hose from the tail pipe again, when suddenly he is grabbed by the strong clutches of Jerome Clifford.

CLIFFORD
You! You little bastard.

Mark SCREAMS. Ricky freaks.

Cliford grabs Mark by the hair, and flings him onto the trunk of the car. Mark kicks and squirms, and Clfford slaps him with a fat hand. Clifford's wild, glowing face is just inches away. His eyes are red and wet.

CLIFFORD
You little bastard.

Mark is yanked off the trunk by his collar. Clifford drags him around the car, through the weeds to the driver's open door, and throws him inside. Ricky is shaking.

INT. CLIFFORD'S BLACK LINCOLN

Mark is hurled across the black leather seat. Terrified, he lunges at the door handle and searches for a door lock switch when Clifford falls behind the steering wheel, closes the door, and pushes the lock button.

Mark is frozen, trying to orientate himself. Both of them pant, the air thickening with fumes.

CLIFFORD
I think we should die together.

MARK
Please let me out of here!

Clifford swigs the whiskey.

CLIFFORD
Sorry, kid. You had to be a cute ass, had to stick your dirty little nose into my business, didn't you? So I think we should die together. Okay? Just you and me, pal. Off to la la land. Sweet dreams.

Mark notices the pistol sitting between them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLIFFORD
You want the gun?

MARK
No sir.

CLIFFORD
So why are you looking at it?

MARK
I wasn't.

Clifford picks up the pistol, and aims it dead on at Mark.

CLIFFORD
Don't lie to me, because if you do, I'll kill you. I'm crazy as hell, okay, and I'll kill you.

MARK
I don't want to die. I take care of my mother and my little brother.

CLIFFORD
Aw, ain't that sweet. A real man of the house.

Clifford shivers, and inhales the poison air deeply.

CLIFFORD
You have a choice, kid. I'll blow your brains out, and it's over now, or the gas'll get you. Your choice.

Mark looks out the cloudy windshield.

MARK
Why are you doing this?

CLIFFORD
'Cause! I've been driven crazy. You see, my beloved buddy in death, we lawyers hear all sorts of private stuff that we can never repeat.

EXT. WOODS

Ricky looks at the big car. Tears stream down his face. He is terrified.

INT. CAR

Clifford is getting hazy. The gun lies in his lap, his finger resting dully on the trigger.

CLIFFORD
I gotta tell you, kid, it's nice having you here. No one wants to die alone. What's your name?

MARK
Mark.

CLIFFORD
Mark who?

MARK
Mark Sway... what's your name?

CLIFFORD
Jerome Clifford. But you can call me 'Romey.' That's what my friends call me, and since you and I are pretty tight now, you can call me 'Romey.'

EXT. WOODS

The CAR sits there, IDLING sinisterly. Ricky trembles in fear for his brother.

INT. CAR

Clifford scribbles on paper.

CLIFFORD
We've got a few minutes left. Any last words, Mark?

MARK
Yeah, why are you doing this?

CLIFFORD
'Cause if I don't kill myself, he will...

MARK
Who... ?

CLIFFORD
'The Blade.' Barry 'The Blade.'
(looks at watch; laughs)
He's waiting for me in a New Orleans restaurant right now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK
Why does this 'Blade' guy want to kill you?

Romey sets the gun down on the seat while he pops a few more pills and gulps liquor.

CLIFFORD
'Cause I'm the only one who knows where the body is buried!!

He laughs, coughs. Mark waits for his chance to grab the gun.

MARK
Whose body?

EXT. WOODS

Ricky looks around, takes a breath, and then lowers himself to the ground. He begins to creep his way towards the car. He is shaking and crying.

INT. CAR

CLIFFORD
My client killed a man and hid the body, and now my client wants to kill me. They've made me crazy. Ha! Ha! This is great, Mark. This is wonderful. I, the trusted lawyer, can now tell you, literally seconds before we float away, where the body is. The body, Mark, the most notorious undiscovered corpse of our time. Don't you read the papers?

Mark is waiting for just the right moment to grab the gun.

EXT. WOODS

Ricky musters up some courage and begins crawling towards the car. He is shaking and crying.

INT. CAR

Mark gets ready to grab the gun.

CONTINUED:

CLIFFORD
... still buried there. Can you believe it?

EXT. UNDERNEATH BLACK LINCOLN

Ricky is crawling towards the back of car, trembling.

INT. CAR

Mark is ready to make his move.

CLIFFORD
... F.B.I. dug up half of New Orleans trying to find it... Guess 'The Blade' ain't so stupid after all...

Mark's hand edges towards gun.

EXT. CAR

Ricky looks up at the hose.

INT. CAR

Mark grabs the gun. Clifford laughs.

CLIFFORD
Go ahead, pull the trigger, kid. I'll be dead and you'll go free.

Mark's hand shakes.

CLIFFORD
Go ahead!!!

EXT. CAR

Ricky, trembling, reaches for hose.

INT. CAR

Clifford screams:

CLIFFORD
Pull the trigger!!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mark can't do it. He drops the pistol and closes his eyes. Immediately Clifford grabs the gun, waves it wildly in front of Mark's face. Mark freaks.

EXT. CAR

Ricky, shaking, reaches for the hose.

INT. CAR

Just as Clifford pulls the trigger. The NOISE is overwhelming in the closed car. Mark screams as a thousand cracks appear around the bullet hole in the window, and Clifford screams along with Mark:

CLIFFORD
It works! It works!

EXT. LINCOLN

Ricky wets his pants.

INT. CAR

Mark unlocks the door while opening the door handle with his left hand. He rams his shoulder into the door and rolls...

OUTSIDE LINCOLN

Mark lands on his hands and knees and instantly regains his feet, racing toward the tall weeds. Passing Ricky, still breathing in huge, ragged breaths. Mark stops, looking to see if he's being followed, but the Lincoln just idles patiently in the sun, one door open.

MARK
Come on!

But Ricky doesn't move. Keeping one eye on the Lincoln, Mark runs back to Ricky, grabs the boy's arm, but the little boy seems dazed, unable to move. Mark shakes him.

MARK
Ricky, damn y--

Suddenly the driver's door opens and Clifford stumbles out, holding the pistol. He can barely stand, and his eyes seem unfocused.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He spins around, shading his eyes from the fierce sun. He calls out weakly:

CLIFFORD
Hey, you little son-of-a-bitch! Where are you? I know where you are!

IN TALL WEEDS

Mark and Ricky duck low and hide.

Clifford is mumbling loudly as he staggers to the rear of the car, and sees the garden hose lying harmlessly in the grass.

Mark and Ricky watch with fear as his feet come near. Clifford swaggers like a slain minotaur.

CLIFFORD
Goddamn kid!

Clifford then takes the gun, and routinely sticks it deep in his mouth, clenching it between his teeth.

Mark and Ricky freak as they hear a GUN BLAST.

Clifford almost falls on top of them. Ricky screaming.

INT. ANTOINE'S (NEW ORLEANS FRENCH QTR.) - LATE AFTERNOON

A silvery blade plunges into a maraschino cherry, lifting it into the air on its tip. The cherry is clenched between a set of white teeth, and swallowed by --

BARRY "THE BLADE" MULDANNO

Handsome, he is wearing a dark green, double-breasted suit. His hair is black, pulled to the back in a small pony tail. He is both attractive, and dangerous. He is standing alone at the dim bar, making eyes with a sexy blonde WAITRESS, who is loading her tray with drinks. He looks down at his wrist, and checks his watch: 6:40.

MULDANNO
(to himself)
Goddamn all.

EXT. ANTOINE'S - LATE AFTERNOON

Muldanno walks out into the crowded, humid night.

EXT. SMALL ALLEY ACROSS STREET - SAME TIME

Across the street is a small alley. A figure moves out of the shadows, and photographs Muldanno walk away up the street. It is FBI SPECIAL AGENT SCHERFF.

EXT. COURTYARD

Muldanno bounds up a narrow staircase, two steps at a time. He reaches the top landing, and heads towards the "LAW OFFICES OF JEROME CLIFFORD."

INT. OFFICE OF JEROME CLIFFORD

Muldanno enters the flashy office. An assistant (FRANK) is cleaning up his desk, getting ready to leave.

BARRY
Where's Romey?

FRANK
I don't know. Mr. Muldunno, he wasn't in all day.

Barry indicates a car with two men in it, parked across the street.

BARRY
Maybe I haven't made myself clear -- your boss has got my life in his hands -- I need to know where he is. Now, God hates a liar: that's what my mother always said.

FRANK
(truly scared)
But I'm not lying, Mr. Muldano. Truly.

Barry takes out his knife. Frank's voice goes high.

FRANK
Why would I lie? He doesn't always tell me where he goes. I'm just a clerk, and --

BARRY
Sh-h.

Frank instantly stops talking. So cool, so calm, Barry opens a heavy metal file drawer and indicates where the door would close.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRY
Put your hand here.

Confused, terrified, Frank starts to put his hand where Barry indicated, hesitates, then finally does it. Barry moves so that he is in a position to slam the drawer on Frank's hand.

FRANK
I swear it, honest to God, why would I --

BARRY
Sh-h.

Tentatively, Frank moves his hand away from the spot.

BARRY
(still soft; patient)
No, put it back.
(as Frank does)
Do you understand that this is important to me?

FRANK
(loud)
I don't know wh--

And Barry slams the drawer on Frank's hand. The sound is awful -- a MUFFLED CHUNK, like hitting a side of beef with a hammer. Frank, his mouth stretched wide in a silent O of pain, goes down on his knees, staring at his injured hand as if he's never seen it before.

Barry kneels down, studies Frank's face calmly.

BARRY
I think you really didn't know where he was.

EXT. WOODS BY TRAILER PARK - DUSK

Spotlights strobe over the bushes, looking for clues. Police cars, an ambulance, and several investigators probe the sight where Romey shot himself.

INT. SWAYS' TRAILER - DUSK

Diane, just home from work, finds Ricky. He is shivering, eyes closed. He is sucking his thumb, curled in a fetal position.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIANNE
Ricky!!! Oh my God. Ricky!!!

Suddenly the door opens, and in walks Mark, followed by a big policeman, SERGEANT HARDY.

DIANNE
Where have you been?!

MARK
Hi, Mom...

DIANNE
What's wrong with Ricky!?

Dianne suddenly sees the policeman.

DIANNE
What have you done? What the hell is going on?

HARDY
Uh, your son's witnessed a suicide, ma'am.

DIANNE
What?

MARK
Ricky and I were back in the woods playing this afternoon, and we saw this big black car parked, and uh...

Hardy listens to Mark closely.

MARK
... when we got closer, there was this man lying there with a gun in his mouth. He was dead.

DIANNE
Oh my god...

MARK
And we ran home as fast as we could and I called 911.

DIANNE
What happened to Ricky?

MARK
Well, we ran home, and he fell on the couch and started sucking his thumb and wouldn't talk...

CONTINUED:

Hardy crouches down to Ricky, and touches his cheek. He takes a walky-talky out of his holster, and speaks into it.

HARDY
This is Sergeant Hardy. We need the paramedics over here at the Sways' trailer now.
(to Dianne)
What time does your husband get home?

DIANNE
Don't have one. What's wrong with Ricky?

HARDY
He needs to be hospitalized. I've seen this before, ma'am. Kid last year. Saw his mother get shot by a crack dealer. Still in the hospital. Won't talk. Won't eat. Sucks his thumb and plays with dolls.

Medics enter.

DIANNE
I don't have health insurance.

HARDY
St. Peter's will take indigent cases. Ya'll need to get packed.

EXT. HIGHWAY INTO MEMPHIS - NIGHT

An ambulance speeds down the highway, its SIREN BLARING. The ambulance is followed by Hardy's cop car.

INT. COP CAR - SAME TIME

Sergeant Hardy drives the car. Mark sits next to him.

HARDY
Are you telling the truth, son?

MARK
About what?

HARDY
About what ya'll saw.

MARK
Don't you believe me?

CONTINUED:

HARDY
You call 911 but wouldn't leave your name.

MARK
That's the first dead body I ever saw and it scared me.

HARDY
Then why'd you sneak back to the scene and hide in the woods where I found you? Why didn't you simply return to the scene and tell us what you saw?

MARK
I was scared. I'm still scared.

HARDY
And if you and Ricky saw the same thing then why is he freaked and you're in pretty good shape, know what I mean?

MARK
Don't you believe me?

HARDY
Did you talk to the man before he killed himself?

MARK
No! I never talked to him.

HARDY
The name 'Jerome Clifford' mean anything to you?

Mark stares straight ahead, saying nothing.

HARDY
I found fresh cigarette butts under that tree with the rope. I doubt you found the body and then decided to smoke some cigarettes. I figure ya'll were under there, having a little smoke and you saw the whole thing happen before your eyes.

MARK
I'm not lying, okay? I've smoked cigarettes there before, but not today.

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

MARK (CONT'D)
We were just walking through the woods, thinking about maybe having a smoke, and we walked up on the car and Romey...

HARDY
Who's 'Romey'?

MARK
That's the guy's name, isn't it?

HARDY
I said 'Jerome Clifford.'

MARK
I thought you said 'Romey' Clifford?

HARDY
Who ever heard of the name 'Romey'?

MARK
Beats me. Have I broken some kind of law? Do you bust kids for smoking cigarettes?

HARDY
No, but kids who lie to cops get in all sorts of trouble.

MARK'S POV - ST. PETER'S HOSPITAL

They follow the ambulance into the emergency entrance of a sprawling hospital complex in the middle of Memphis.

FULL SCREEN - TELEVISION NEWS REPORT

Graphics read: "SPECIAL REPORT." Two reporters (Jerry and Elaine) sit in a newsroom in front of rear projection of Romey Clifford.

ELAINE (V.O.)
New Orleans Mafia lawyer Jerome R. Clifford was found dead in an apparent suicide outside Memphis just hours ago.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELAINE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
The famed lawyer for alleged Mafia hitman Barry 'The Blade' Muldanno was due to defend his client in trial next month in the increasingly notorious case of still missing Louisiana Senator Boyd Boyette... presumed dead.

During this, we have seen footage of Muldanno and then of Senator Boyette. Elaine turns to Jerry.

JERRY (V.O.)
And it was going to be tough enough to build a case against Muldanno without a body... but surely Clifford's death will mean more delays. Looks like the plot thickens and sickens for U.S. Attorney Roy Foltrigg.

Roy Foltrigg appears in rear projection.

ELAINE (V.O.)
No case, no body, no conviction, no front-page pictures that Attorney Foltrigg likes so much, no interviews on C.N.N., no speedy ascent to Capitol Hill... Sorry, Reverend Roy.

The CAMERA BEGINS TO PULL BACK, and we are in a small room, filled with several men. U.S. Attorney J. ROY FOLTRIGG, sitting in a swivel chair. Surrounding Foltrigg are Assistant U.S. Attorney THOMAS FINK, WALLY BOX, and Special Agent TRUMANN who rips a fax off of a fax machine, and starts to read it to Foltrigg and the boys.

TRUMANN
'Single gunshot wound to the head, self-inflicted. Apparently he tried to do it first with a garden hose in the tailpipe, but for some reason it didn't work. He was taking Dalmane and Codeine, and washing it all down with Jack Daniels. Cheap .38 snub nose. Thought he could swallow a bullet. No doubt a suicide.'

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FOLTRIGG
I don't suppose anyone saw it.

TRUMAN
Evidently not. Couple of kids found the body in a remote area of Memphis.

Suddenly the narrow room shakes and we realize we are on A SMALL PRIVATE PLANE.

FOLTRIGG
Clifford secretly contacted me yesterday. He was drunk, out of his head. He said he wanted to 'talk about the Muldanno case.' Kept saying he couldn't go through with the trial. We were going to meet in Memphis tonight. He called me again this morning in a panic, hinted he might 'know where the body is' and fished to see whether he'd accidentally slipped me some clues. I played along, thanked him, hung up, and then I guess he flipped his lid and blew his head off. He knew where Muldanno put Boyd Boyette's body, I know it.

TRUMANN
Goddamit, if we had the body, we'd have Muldanno by the short hairs. Relax, Larry. Let's say you're a lawyer, heaven forbid. And you represent a killer who's murdered a United States Senator, but the state has no case without a body. Let's say that the killer tells you where he hid the body. So, two, and only two, people in the entire world know this secret. And you, the lawyer, go off the deep end. You get pills and whiskey and a gun and a water hose, and you drive five hours from home, and you kill yourself. Now, wouldn't you share your little secret with someone? We just gotta find the someone.

EXT. PLANE - NIGHT

It flies toward Memphis. CAMERA FINDS AERIAL VIEW of St. Peter's hospital.

INT. ST. PETER'S - NIGHT

A large oil painting of Elvis on a wall reading: "ELVIS PRESLEY TRAUMA CENTER."

SWINGING DOORS

fly open and DR. SIMON GREENWAY, in a yellow jogging suit, runs over to Dianne, Mark and Hardy.

GREENWAY
Mrs. Sway, I'm Doctor Greenway, I'm a psychiatrist... you need to come with me.

HARDY
I'll stay with Mark.

Dianne and Greenway disappear as Hardy looks down at Mark.

HARDY
Ya'll wanna soda?

MARK
Sprite.

Hardy puts change into the Coke machine.

HARDY
What happened to your face?

MARK
I got into a fight in school.

Hardy hands him a can of Sprite.

HARDY
It's summer. No school.

MARK
I mean from school. A kid I go to school with.

HARDY
Who was the kid?

MARK
Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARDY
I'm a cop. It's my job to ask questions. Besides, your story is full of holes. I think you were in the car before Clifford died.

MARK
What does 'indigent' mean?

HARDY
Poor. Like you and your mother and your little brother. So if you don't tell the truth that might snap him out of it... he could lie in some poor crazy people institution with padded walls and cockroaches and chained to some filthy bed and all...

KAREN (O.S.)
Mark?

Mark looks up to see KAREN THE GORGEOUS, a pretty young nurse with blonde hair and a perfect smile. She extends her smooth, tan hand with long red fingernails to Mark.

KAREN
Dr. Greenway wants to talk to you.

Mark grabs her hand gladly and they leave Hardy.

INT. RICKY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT (SAME TIME)

Karen leaves Mark in Ricky's room.

Dianne cradles Ricky, who is lying curled up in a hospital bed, an IV attached to his arm.

MARK
How sick is he?

GREENWAY
It's a severe case of acute post-traumatic stress disorder.

MARK
What does that mean?

CONTINUED:

GREENWAY
Sometimes a person sees a terrible event and cannot cope with it. Ricky sort of snapped. It shocked his mind and body. What did he see this afternoon?

MARK
Is this in secret?

GREENWAY
Yes.

MARK
What if the cops want to know what I tell you?

Greenway looks at Dianne, who is puzzled by Mark's question. He looks back at Mark.

GREENWAY
I can't tell them. I promise. This is all very secret. Just you and me and your mother. We're all trying to help Ricky, and I've got to know what happened.

DIANNE
Mark! You tell the doctor now!

MARK
The man tried to kill himself with the hose and the exhaust pipe. I pulled it out when he was in the car. After a little while, the man came out, saw the hose on the ground, and then shot himself in the mouth. Ricky and I saw the whole thing.

DIANNE
Oh my God. Poor Ricky.

GREENWAY
I'm hoping he'll come around in the next couple of days... Now you said the father is of no use...

MARK
Keep him away from Ricky!!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GREENWAY
Stay calm, Mark. Any grandparents or relatives nearby?

DIANNE
No.

GREENWAY
Very well, it's imperative then you stay with him for the next few days...

DIANNE
But... my job...

GREENWAY
I'll call your employer... I'm sure...

DIANNE
My employer runs a sweatshop... He will not send flowers... He will not understand...

He hands her pills and water.

GREENWAY
Dalmane... it should help you rest. See you in the morning.

She swallows the pills as he leaves.

MARK
I'm sorry, Mom...

DIANNE
It's okay, honey... 'Spose we been through worse with your dad...

She lies down, the exhaustion and Dalmane working.

MARK
We need to talk, Mom.

DIANNE
In the morning, honey...

Suddenly, Mark's eyes widen.

Mark sees Sergeant Hardy through the door, discretely sealing the Sprite can that Mark was sipping earlier, in a plastic eveidence bag.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Mark quickly exits the room and watches Hardy head towards the elevator.

KAREN (O.S.)
Everything okay, Mark?

Mark sees Karen at the nurses station.

MARK
Oh yeah, sure...

But he sees Hardy step onto the elevator. Hardy gives him a shit-eating grin as the doors close. Mark's brain is reeling. He moves into the small, dark sitting area.

A PATIENT in a wheelchair, with a bandaged head and bandaged legs, is sitting by an empty dinner tray, watching the news on the television.

A man (GILL TEAL) with a white shirt, tie, patchy skin and a sweaty suit sits down next to the man in the wheelchair.

GILL TEAL
Bad injury. What happened?

PATIENT
Car wreck. Got hit by an oil truck. Nut ran a stop sign.

GILL TEAL
Name's Gill Teal. I'm a lawyer. You got a problem, I'll fix it. I specialize in car wrecks, especially large trucks. You name it, I go after it. What you got -- two broke legs, concussion, coupla puncture wounds? Permanent disability?

PATIENT
Look, I already have a lawyer...

GILL TEAL
I can get you more than anybody. I go for the jugular. It's warfare, and I'm the best in town. I can get you six hundred thousand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PATIENT
My lawyer says he can get me a million.

GILL TEAL
Who? Scottie Ray? Rob LaMoke?

The man begins to wheel away.

GILL TEAL
McFay? Ragland? Snodgrass? Slimebags who'll screw up your case. Don't make a mistake. Check me out. Look in the Yellow Pages. There's a full-page ad for me. 'Look up Gill Teal, and you'll see who's for real.'

Gill waves a reprint of his Yellow Page ad.

PATIENT
Will you guys leave me alone! There are more lawyers around this place than doctors!

The man is gone. Gill laughs a bit to himself and leaves. Mark picks up the reprint.

EXT. MEMPHIS FEDERAL BUILDING - NIGHT

Foltrigg, Trumann, Fink and Boxx walk from their limo and head toward the building, as JASON McTHUNE, imposing, headstrong, sharp, exits toward them.

TRUMANN
(to Foltrigg)
Wait 'til you get a load of this guy.

McTHUNE
Mr. Foltrigg, Jason McThune. Welcome to Memphis.

FOLTRIGG
Save the shit, McThune.

They enter and speedily walk through the empty building.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

McTHUNE
Kid's name is Mark Sway. I think he's lying. He told Memphis P.D. he and his younger brother happened upon the body and ran to call authorities. They live about a half a mile away in a trailer park. The younger kid is in the hospital now suffering from what appears to be traumatic shock. Mark Sway and his mother, Dianne, divorced, are also at the hospital. The father lives here in the city, has a record of petty stuff. Low-class people.

FOLTRIGG
What makes you think the kid's lying?

McTHUNE
We got that car, and found us some clues...

They enter McThune's small office.

McTHUNE
First, the kid's fingerprints are all over the car, inside and out. We lifted a print from him about four hours ago from a Sprite can. We also found two fresh cigarettes under a tree near the car, the same brand Dianne Sway, the mother, uses. We figure the kids went for a smoke. Clifford appears and caught them. Just accidentally. It looks as though he left New Orleans shortly after nine A.M., drove to Memphis in five or six hours, stopped once for gas, stopped to buy the gun, and drove off and shot himself. He was born here in Memphis, and now he died here, too... and here's a new piece of evidence.

He drops a note of paper wrapped in plastic on Foltrigg's lap.

CONTINUED:

FOLTRIGG
It's nothing but funeral arrangements and directions to his secretary.

McTHUNE
Yeah, but look at the bottom. It looks as though he tried to add something with a blue ball-point pen, but the pen was out of ink.

FOLTRIGG
It says, 'Mark, Mark where...' I can't read the rest.

McTHUNE
My theory is that the kid was in the car before Clifford shot himself, and that he was there for some time because of all the prints, and that he and Clifford talked about something.

TRUMANN
Why would the kid lie?

FOLTRIGG
One, he's scared. Two, he's a kid. Three, maybe Clifford told him something he knows he doesn't need to know. Good work, McThune.

McTHUNE
Thank you sir. Petition me out of this shit hole, Mr. Foltrigg.

Foltrigg smiles.

FOLTRIGG
I want to speak to the kid.

EXT. ST. PETER'S - SUNRISE

INT. WAITING AREA

Mark sleeps as Karen wakes him with o.j. She is more beautiful than ever.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK
How old are you?

KAREN
(smiling)
Twenty-four. Why?

MARK
Are you married?

KAREN
No... come on.

He is glad to take her hand as they head toward Ricky's room.

INT. RICKY'S ROOM

Dr. Greenway is examining Ricky, who is still in shock. Dianne watches anxiously.

GREENWAY
He's almost comatose. Normally after a good sleep they'll be awake and eating.

Mark and Karen enter.

DIANNE
What'll we do?

GREENWAY
His vital signs are stable. He'll come around... and it's imperative you be here when he does.

DIANNE
I ain't leavin' Ricky.

Greenway unfolds his newspaper.

GREENWAY
Have you seen this?

"FLAMBOYANT CRIMINAL LAWYER WITH SUSPECTED MOB TIES." The word "mob" makes Mark sick. Dianne gasps.

DIANNE
Oh my God.

CONTINUED:

GREENWAY
It's a big case. Boyd Boyette was the first U.S. Senator to be murdered in office. There are police and F.B.I. downstairs. They were waiting when I arrived an hour ago. They want to talk to Mark.

MARK
I don't want to talk to them! Mom, I'm gonna wind up like Ricky if the cops don't stop buggin' me!!

GREENWAY
They won't go away. I'll be back at noon. Perhaps we should talk to them then.

DIANNE
Whatever you think...

MARK
No, Mom...

DIANNE
I don't know what the hell to do. I feel like I'm losin' my mind. My baby's in a coma or somethin', and we gotta stay here 'til he wakes up, and if I lose any more work, I know they'll let me go, sure as shit, oh God...

GREENWAY
Karen.

Karen and Greenway leave.

DIANNE
You never lie to me, Mark... are you lyin' about somethin' now?

MARK
I'm just hungry, Mom. I didn't eat last night. Give me a couple bucks and I'll bring you back coffee and doughnuts from the cafeteria...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIANNE
Where's the cafeteria?

MARK
Basement. Madison Wing. I've been there twice.

DIANNE
I suppose you've been all over this place.

MARK
Yes, ma'm, we're on the quietest floor. The babies are in the basement and it's a circus down there.

She hands him money.

DIANNE
Be careful, baby.

He crosses Karen as she enters.

KAREN
Doctor Greenway wants you to take some Valium, Mrs. Sway.

INT. HOSPITAL STAIRWELL

Mark quickly jogs down the stairwell.

EXT. ST. PETER'S CHARITY HOSPITAL - DAY

A metal side door opens, and Mark steps out into the day.

Mark turns, and sees the main entrance to the hospital, which is surveyed by a television crew.

Mark looks at the small crowd of reporters with disbelief. He turns away from them, reaches into his pocket and takes out the reprint ad Gill Teal left on the table the night before.

Mark discreetly runs away from the hospital.

EXT. STREETS (DOWNTOWN MEMPHIS)

Mark heads for the Sterick Building.

INT. STERICK BUILDING - NINTH FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY
(MOMENTS LATER)

Mark walks down the hallway away from the elevator doors. He tries to stand tall among the adults walking around.

Mark looks up at the name plaques on the doors.

Mark nears the end of the hall, and finds the door he has been looking for. The sign reads: "GILL TEAL - The People's Lawyer." Mark smiles, tries to look calm, and enters the door.

INT. GILL TEAL'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

The office is packed with people, supposedly suffering from all sorts of injuries.

Suddenly, a fat RECEPTIONIST yells at Mark.

RECEPTIONIST
You, boy! What do you want?

MARK
I'd like to see Mr. Teal.

RECEPTIONIST
(suspicious)
Where are your parents?

MARK
I'm not with them.

RECEPTIONIST
Ya'll can't just walk in here without an appointment. Besides, you're a kid... Are ya'll injured?

MARK
No.

RECEPTIONIST
Well, see all these people... we only do injuries.

MARK
Okay, if I get hit by a truck or something, I'll come back to see you.

NINTH FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Mark closes the door and starts down the long corridor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He passes many small-time lawyers' doors. Most of them read "INJURIES, ACCIDENTS." Catching glimpses into some of the offices only intimidates and discourages Mark more. The corridor is crowded and an eleven-year-old is in the way.

END OF CORRIDOR

Mark sees a small door that reads "REGGIE LOVE, ATTORNEY -- DIVORCE, DOMESTIC, JUVENILES." He is just about to try his luck when an attractive young man (CLINT VAN HOOSER) emerges busily carrying letters to be mailed, etc.

CLINT
(to someone inside)
Back in twenty, Reggie...

He barrels down the staircase leaving the door slightly ajar. Mark pushes it open slowly and enters.

Mark stands alone in the reception area and sees the door to Reggie Love's office is open. Mark walks in, and stands in the doorway.

INT. REGGIE LOVE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

It is a pleasant office. There is a medium-size desk, and the swivel chair behind it which is turned away from Mark.

Mark hears a WOMAN'S VOICE on the phone. Mark approaches the desk, and circles the chair. To his surprise, REGGIE LOVE is an attractive woman. 40ish, sexy and very on-top-of-it. She is lying back with her feet crossed over the credenza in back of her desk. She suddenly sees Mark standing in her office, and springs up.

REGGIE
Uh, Sam? Sam. There's someone in my office. Let me call you back, okay? Great, thanks. Good-bye.

Reggie puts down the phone, and faces Mark.

REGGIE
Who are you?

Mark is silent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REGGIE
Are you in trouble? You lookin' for the little boys' room?

MARK
I'm not a little boy. I need a lawyer. Where's Mr. Love?

REGGIE
I am Reggie Love. What makes you think you need a lawyer, young man?

MARK
Because I'm supposed to talk to the F.B.I. at noon.

REGGIE
Well then you need a lawyer. Unless, of course, you feel uncomfortable with a woman lawyer.

MARK
If I tell you something, will you ever repeat it?

REGGIE
Of course not. It's privileged, confidential. It's like talking to your doctor or minister.

MARK
What if I told you something the police really want to know?

REGGIE
I can't repeat it. I assume you don't have a lot of money to hire me, do you?

MARK
No.

REGGIE
Technically, you're supposed to pay me something as a retainer, and once this is done I'm your lawyer and we'll go from there. Do you have a dollar?

MARK
Yes.

Mark pulls out the crumpled dollar from his pocket.

CONTINUED:

MARK
I saw a woman laywer on 'L.A. Law' once, she ripped up some cops pretty good. I'll take my chances with you.

REGGIE
Okay, now I'm the lawyer and you're the client. Tell me your story.

INT. NINTH FLOOR HALLWAY - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

Clint comes barreling back from errands and explodes into --

REGGIE'S OFFICE

only to find her deep in conversation with Mark.

CLINT
You wanna order lunch in... Oh, sorry...

He shuts the door, leaving them alone again. Reggie is spellbound at what she is hearing.

MARK
I've lied to the police, and I think they know I'm lying. My brother's in a coma because of me. My mom might lose her job. It's all my fault and I don't know what to do.

REGGIE
Have you told me everything you know?

MARK
Well, almost.

REGGIE
Have you lied to me?

MARK
No.

REGGIE
Do you know where Senator Boyd Boyette's body is buried?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK
I know what Romey Clifford told me. Do I have to tell you where it is?

REGGIE
I'm not sure. What keeps you from telling me?

MARK
I don't want anybody to know what I know because Romey told me this 'Barry the Blade' guy had killed many people and was planning on killing Romey, too. If he's killed lots of people, and if he thinks I know this secret, he'll come after me. He's in the Mafia. I seen this Mafia movie on T.V. and they said 'The mob never forgets,' and that really scares me. Wouldn't it scare you?

REGGIE
I believe it would. Let's do this, Mark. Don't tell me where the body is, okay? For now anyway. Maybe later, but not now.

MARK
What about the police and the F.B.I.? It's almost noon.

REGGIE
(getting up)
That's my job.

EXT. RIVERFRONT DOCKS (NEW ORLEANS) - DAY

A car pulls up onto the docks with the mighty Mississippi River just behind the cavernous buildings.

Barry "The Blade" Muldanno walks towards one of the huge warehouses.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Muldanno heads toward the center of the huge, empty warehouse, where there sits a makeshift office on risers.

CONTINUED:

Behind the desk sits JOHNNY SULARI, kingpin for the New Orleans Mafia. Spread before him are newspapers headlining Romey's suicide.

Behind Sulari stands PAUL GRONKE and BONO, ugly thugs, "Barry the Blade" stands before the desk.

SULARI
It looks like Romey killed himself because he knew too much. It looks like that, Barry. Now tell me the truth, did you tell that son-of-a-bitch more than he should have known?

Muldanno is silent.

SULARI
Did you?

MULDANNO
I hope it hurt the bastard. I hope that bullet was slow. I hope he felt the top of his head come off.

SULARI
Two kids found him, but there's a chance he was still alive! He might have talked!

MULDANNO
Don't worry, Uncle Johnny. I'll just go up to Memphis and take care of those kids.

SULARI
You dumb-ass. You can't set foot in Memphis. The Fibbies are watching you! Besides, we don't kill kids!

MULDANNO
I do.

SULARI
You sit on your dumb ass and don't get into any more trouble. Gronke. I want you up in Memphis. Check things out.

GRONKE
Understood.

INT. ST. PETER'S HOSPITAL - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

There is a KNOCK at the door.

Foltrigg, McThune, Trumann, Fink and Boxx sit alone in the small room, behind a table.

TRUMANN
Come in.

The door opens, and Mark slowly enters, and shuts the door behind him.

TRUMANN
You must be Mark.

Mark nods.

McTHUNE
Where's your mother, son?

MARK
Uh, who are you?

McTHUNE
I'm Jason McThune, F.B.I. Memphis, and this is Larry Trumann, F.B.I. New Orleans.

FOLTRIGG
Roy Foltrigg, U.S. Attorney for Louisiana. Have a seat, Mark.

Mark sits down in the small chair in front of the table.

McTHUNE
We, uh, we really expected your mother and Dr. Greenway to be here.

MARK
They're with my brother. They can't leave in case he wakes up. My mother has to be there to tell him everything will be all right. We can wait a day or two until she might be available...

The men see a great opportunity.

FOLTRIGG
No, Mark, we really need to talk now. Let's talk a few minutes, okay? Just us. Are you nervous?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK
A little.

FOLTRIGG
We just want to ask you some questions about yesterday.

MARK
Do I need a lawyer?

The men look at each other.

TRUMANN
Of course not.

MARK
Why not?

TRUMANN
Well, we just, you know, want to ask you a few questions. That's all.

MARK
I think maybe I need a lawyer to, you know, protect my rights and all.

McTHUNE
You've been watching too much T.V., kid.

TRUMANN
Yeah, lawyers just get in the way. You have to pay them money, and they object to everything. A real pain in the ass, Mark, you understand.

MARK
What happens if I don't answer your questions?

McTHUNE
Oh, lots of things. We might be forced to take you down to our office, in the back seat of the car, of course, no handcuffs, and ask you some really tough questions. May have to bring in your mother, too.

MARK
Will my mother get in trouble?

CONTINUED:

McTHUNE
Maybe.

FOLTRIGG
Mark, have you ever heard of obstruction of justice?

MARK
I don't think so.

FOLTRIGG
Well, it's a federal offense. A person who knows something about a crime, and withholds information from the F.B.I. or the police, might be found guilty of obstruction of justice.

MARK
What happens then?

FOLTRIGG
Well, if found guilty, such a person might be punished. You know, sent to jail or something like that.

MARK
So, if I don't answer your questions, I might go to jail?

FOLTRIGG
Maybe.

MARK
If you were in my place, would you want a lawyer?

FOLTRIGG
Hell no! They're just a pain-in-the-ass. A real pain. If you have nothing to hide, you don't need a lawyer.

MARK
But aren't you a lawyer?

TRUMANN
Mark, was Jerome Clifford already dead when you and Ricky found him?

MARK
I take the Fifth Amendment.

CONTINUED:

Trumann and McThune are getting frustrated.

TRUMANN
Look, Mark, I think you've been watching too much T.V. Let me guess. You watch 'L.A. Law,' right?

MARK
Every week.

TRUMANN
Figures.

MARK
I need to go to the bathroom.

TRUMANN
Five minutes, Mark, we'll wait. No hurry.

Mark leaves the room.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Mark shuts the door and runs down the hallway. He stops at a stairwell door, where:

REGGIE IS WAITING for him.

INT. HOSPITAL BRIEFING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

TRUMANN
What do you think?

McTHUNE
We got 'im. Good cop, bad cop. This is...

There is a KNOCK on the door.

McTHUNE
Come in, Mark.
(to others)
Polite kid.

Reggie Love enters the room. The men stand up quickly.

REGGIE
Keep your seats.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRUMANN
We're in a meeting.

McTHUNE
You're in the wrong room.

REGGIE
I don't think so. My name is Reggie Love. I'm an attorney, and I represent Mark Sway.

She hands out her card as Mark enters behind her.

McTHUNE
When did he hire you?

REGGIE
Well that's really none of your business, now is it? I'm not hired. I'm retained. Can I see your I.D. please?

The men glance at each other helplessly. They reach into their jackets, and fumble for their badges.

Reggie examines their I.D.s, and writes something in her pad.

FOLTRIGG
Now, Ms. Love, I'm sure we...

REGGIE
Did you in fact attempt to interrogate this child outside the presence of his mother?

TRUMANN
No.

REGGIE
He tells me you did.

TRUMANN
He's confused. We asked where his mother was, and he said she couldn't make it right now, and we sort of thought she was on her way or something, so we were just chitchatting with the kid. Where were you during this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REGGIE
Don't ask questions that are irrelevant. Did you advise Mark to talk to a lawyer?

McTHUNE
Uh, yeah, once, Larry, remember Mark said something, or maybe I said something about 'L.A. Law,' and then Mark said he might need a lawyer, but he was sort of kidding and we, or at least I, took it as a joke. Remember, Larry?

REGGIE
He didn't ask you guys if he needed a lawyer?

FOLTRIGG
I don't remember it that way. He's just a kid, and very scared, and I think he's confused.

REGGIE
Did you advise him of his Miranda rights?

McTHUNE
Of course not. He's just a kid. We need to ask him a few questions.

REGGIE
And you did not attempt to interrogate him without his mother's presence or counsel?

McTHUNE
No.

REGGIE
And you did not tell him to avoid lawyers after he asked your advice?

McTHUNE
No, ma'am.

TRUMANN
No way. The kid's lying if he told you otherwise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Reggie smiles. She opens her purse, and takes out a small tape recorder. She places the TAPE RECORDER on the table. Pressing the button, their VOICES fill the room.

REGGIE
I think we know who's lying.

TRUMANN
You wired the kid!

REGGIE
Why not? No crime. You're the F.B.I., remember? You boys run more wire than A.T. & T. It's all right here on tape, fellas. You boys attempted to interrogate a child outside the presence of his mother and without her consent. He specifically asked you if you shouldn't wait until she was available and you said 'no.' You attempted to coerce the child with the threat of criminal prosecution. He told you he was scared, and twice he specifically asked you if he needed a lawyer. You advised him not to get a lawyer, giving as one of your reasons the opinion that lawyers are a 'pain in the ass.'

Reggie puts the tape recorder back in her purse.

REGGIE
Now that we've put all the cards on the table, I'd like to confer with my client, and meet with you people in my office tomorrow at 9:00 A.M. And if I need something from you boys, like the truth or a straight answer, I expect to get it. If I catch you lying again, I'll use this tape.

TRUMANN
That's blackmail.

REGGIE
Indict me.

She leaves.

INT. RICKY'S ROOM - DAY

Reggie empties a large paper bag of deli as Mark introduces her to Dianne.

DIANNE
There's been a mistake, ma'am. We can't afford no lawyer.

MARK
I already paid her a dollar.

DIANNE
A dollar?

REGGIE
It's just a token, Mrs. Sway, but it's legal.

MARK
She's pretty good. I've been impressed so far.

DIANNE
But why do we need a lawyer? Have you told me everything? Are you lyin' to me, Mark?

Reggie sees Dianne take a pill.

MARK
Mom, it all happened so fast yesterday, like a big blur... and you know how it's affected Ricky. I think it shocked me sort of like that... Not as bad, but I'm remembering things now.

DIANNE
What things?

Mark looks to Reggie.

REGGIE
Ah, Mrs. Sway. Why don't we go down the hall and have a chat. I need to ask you a few questions.

DIANNE
Okay. I need a cigarette bad, Mark; you watch Ricky, now... holler if he wakes, okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The women leave. Mark moves toward Ricky. Ricky's eyes are open. He is staring at Mark, still in shock.

MARK
Ricky. Hi. Don't be shivering. It's hot in here, and you're wearing my old pajamas.

He pulls the covers over him. Mark sees some of Ricky's plastic toys lying around the bed.

MARK
You wanna play G.I. Joes?
(picking up some toys)
Come on. Bang! Kapow!

Mark simulates a little war on Ricky's bed. Still no response.

MARK
You wan' me to do my 'crazy dance'?

Mark stands in the middle of the room, and begins to dance like an epileptic. Ricky doesn't react.

MARK
Ricky, do you remember going for a smoke?

Ricky slowly seems to nod.

MARK
Right? Remember? Yeah, and do you remember the black car?

Ricky begins to look frightened, and slowly begins to curl up, retreating.

MARK
No, Ricky, it's okay, Ricky. It's okay. I know this is my fault. I shouldn'ta taken you out for that cigarette. I shouldn'ta made you stay when that car pulled up...

Ricky is quiet again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK
I'm gonna fix this, Ricky. I am. I hired us a lawyer, and she's really good, even if she is just a woman. She'll protect us, and everything will be alright again. You'll see...

Suddenly a reporter, SLICK MOELLER, pops into the room, taking a flash photograph.

MARK
What're you doing?

MOELLER
Slick Moeller, with the Memphis Press, I wrote this morning's story. How's your brother?

MARK
Get out!

MOELLER
Hey, come on -- an exclusive interview, I'll pay you. Cops say you know more than you're telling.

MARK
You want me to call the nurse?

MOELLER
Did the dead guy talk to you?

MARK
(calling)
Karen?

MOELLER
(starts taking ten flash photos of Mark as he backs out of the room)
Did the guy touch you any place or like that? Did he say why he was offing himself?

MARK
Karen!!??

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Reggie, Dianne, Karen Greenway come running as Mark pushes Slick out into the hall.

EXT. SEEDY, RUNDOWN NEIGHBORHOOD (DOWNTOWN MEMPHIS) - AFTERNOON

An elevated TRAIN WHIZZES by. On the other side of the tracks is an old brick building. On the second floor, there is a sign painted on the windows which reads, "J. Nance Private Investigator."

INT. NANCE AND SISSON PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS (MEMPHIS) - DAY

JACK NANCE, a sleaze, sits alone in his messy office. A fan blows some hot air around.

Nance looks up, and sees Paul Gronke, the thug from New Orleans, standing in the doorway.

GRONKE
Nance.

NANCE
That's me.

GRONKE
Name's Gronke. I need some fast work.

NANCE
Who referred you?

GRONKE
I've heard of you. Word gets around.

NANCE
Give me a name.

GRONKE
Muldanno.

NANCE
I get two thousand dollars up front, non-refundable, cash, before I lift a finger.

Gronke reaches into his pocket, and takes out a stack of bills. He throws the stack on Nance's lap.

GRONKE
We need someone with Memphis connections.

NANCE
I get a hundred bucks an hour, cash.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRONKE
No problem.

INT. VISITOR'S LOUNGE - HOSPITAL - AFTERNOON

Reggie and Mark talk alone.

REGGIE
Well, I think we've covered everything. So I'll pick you up quarter to tomorrow morning and we'll see what the F.B.I. and Reverend Roy have to say for themselves.

MARK
What would happen to me if I never told anyone what I know?

REGGIE
You've told me.

MARK
I told you I know where the body is, but I haven't told you where...

REGGIE
Do you want to tell me?

MARK
Not really, not now.

REGGIE
Okay.

MARK
So what happens if I never tell?

REGGIE
I think an effort will be made to force you to talk. A judge in a courtroom one day soon could order you to talk.

MARK
And if I said 'no'...?

REGGIE
If an adult refuses a court order he's in contempt and could be locked up.

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

REGGIE (CONT'D)
I don't know what they'd do with a child... excuse me, a minor. But I must warn you, Mark: If you lie in court you could be in big trouble.

Reggie stands.

REGGIE
Eat well, get a good night's rest, and everything will be just fine. 'Bye, Mark.

MARK
Thanks.

Reggie walks down the hall. Mark sits alone in the lounge. He finds a remote control for the TELEVISION set, and begins to FLIP some CHANNELS.

A grungy-looking man sits down near Mark. The man is JACK NANCE.

NANCE
Hi there.

Mark nods at the strange-looking man, and then begins to SWITCH the television CHANNELS.

NANCE
What're you doing here?

MARK
Watching television.

NANCE
I'm here for my son. He's in real bad shape. Car wreck. Drunk driver. Kid was thrown onto the street.

MARK
Where is he?

NANCE
I.C.U., first floor. I had to get away. It's a zoo down there, people screaming and crying all the time.

MARK
I'm sorry.

CONTINUED:

NANCE
He's only eight years old.

MARK
My little brother's eight.

NANCE
What's wrong with him?

MARK
He's in shock.

NANCE
Bless his heart. What happened, exactly?

Mark looks at Nance again, and studies him suspiciously.

MARK
It's a long story. And getting longer. He'll make it, though. I hope your kid's okay.

Nance stands up.

NANCE
Me too. I need to go check on him. Good luck to you, uh, what's your name?

MARK
Jimmy...

Mark leaves.

NANCE
'Jimmy.' Right. Well, good luck, Jimmy. I gotta run.

INT. SWAY TRAILER - NIGHT (TWO YEARS EARLIER)

Mark's drunken father COLE mistreats Dianne, who clutches onto a younger Ricky. Cole pushes her out of the trailer.

EXT. TRAILER - NIGHT

Dianne sobs and bangs on the trailer door as neighbors come to her aid.

INT. TRAILER

Mark attacks his father savagely. But Cole just shoves Mark out of the trailer also.

EXT. TRAILER

Suddenly Mark is all alone in the woods at night. He is frightened. He runs just as Romey Clifford, corpse-like with the bullet hole in his head, looms in front of him. His voice is slow and strange but his message is clear.

CLIFFORD
The mob never forgets.

INT. RICKY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Mark wakes from the nightmare. He's on a small mattress at the foot of the bed where Dianne sleeps with Ricky. Mark looks around. He feels uneasy. The door seems opened strangely. He sees a shadow in the hall. Mark gets up and cautiously steps into the...

HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

It's empty. Everyone's asleep. He heads toward a blonde head at the nurses' station, only to find it to be a much older NURSE.

MARK
Oh... Where's Karen?

NURSE
Not on tonight... Anything wrong?

MARK
No... got anything to eat around here?

NURSE
Cafeteria's open 24 hours.

Mark walks away from the counter, and passes the empty TV area. As he passes a table, he sees a bunch of newly delivered morning newspapers sitting there.

As Mark gets closer, his eyes widen.

On the front page of the morning paper are two pictures, taken by Slick Moeller. One picture is of Ricky, asleep in a coma, the other picture is of Mark, angrily yelling at Slick to get out of the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mark sees that their names are printed below the pictures, and there is a detailed story about the FBI wanting to question the boys.

Mark picks up a newspaper, and begins to read the article with disbelief. He walks down the hall towards the elevators.

Mark reaches the elevators, and pushes the button, still reading the newspaper. It looks as if he is trying not to cry.

MARK
(to himself)
Oh, my gosh.

The elevator doors open, and Mark steps inside.

INT. ELEVATOR - SAME TIME

Mark pushes the button for the cafeteria level, when suddenly...

... an arm catches the doors and a man steps inside the elevator with Mark. Mark looks up, and sees that it is a big man, dressed in a surgeon's robe and mask.

The man looks down at Mark, and we know it is Paul Gronke.

Mark looks down the arm of the man and sees that he is holding a glinting scalpel knife in his rubber-gloved hand.

The doors close. The elevator begins to move downward. Suddenly, Gronke pushes the stop button and turns off the elevator lights, stopping the elevator between floors. The emergency light illuminates everything in red.

In a flash, Gronke grabs Mark by the throat and pushes him against the wall. Mark is frozen with fear.

GRONKE
Listen to me, 'Mark Sway.'

Mark's eyes are wide with fear.

GRONKE
I don't know what Romey told you, but if you repeat a single word to anyone, including your 'lawyer,' I'll kill you.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRONKE (CONT'D)
And I'll kill your mother and little Ricky, okay? He's in room 943.

Gronke lifts the scalpel to Mark's face.

GRONKE
I'll slice your guts out, do you understand me?

Mark's eyes are getting wet. He is shaking.

GRONKE
I'll kill you, do you believe me? And if you tell anyone about me, I'll get you. Understand? I've seen the trailer where you live.

Gronke takes a picture out of his coat pocket, and holds it in front of Mark's face.

GRONKE
Seen this before?

It is the department store portrait of Mark and Ricky, obviously stolen from the Sway trailer.

Mark shuts his eyes, knowing what this means.

The doors open, and in a flash Mark is alone, sitting in the corner of the empty elevator.

EXT. MEMPHIS - EARLY MORNING

THUNDER and rain.

INT. REGGIE'S OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

RAIN BEATS outside as Reggie pours over research on Senator Boyd Boyette, Muldanno and Foltrigg. Newspaper clippings, Xeroxes, etc. are spread out on her desk as Clint brings her some coffee.

REGGIE
What're we serving today?

CLINT
It's Wednesday. Southern pecan.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REGGIE
Senator Boyd Boyette got himself killed. He took pay-offs from the Mafia to build a toxic waste dump and then fought against it to get votes.

CLINT
Enter 'Barry the Blade.'

REGGIE
If Reverend Roy can ever prove it...

Suddenly Mark runs in dripping wet.

REGGIE
Mark, I was just going to pick you up. You're all wet...

As she moves closer, she sees that he is shaking.

REGGIE
What's the matter.

CLINT
You want some hot cocoa?

MARK
I want coffee and a cigarette, and stop treating me like a kid. I don't want to talk to the F.B.I. today.

REGGIE
Did something happen?

MARK
I don't want to talk to the F.B.I. today.

REGGIE
Mark, you look scared.

CLINT
It's almost nine. Mr. Foltrigg will be here in a minute.

Clint leaves again as Reggie studies Mark. She picks up a newspaper clipping with a picture of Muldanno.

REGGIE
Is this the man?

CONTINUED:

MARK
What man?

REGGIE
Someone threatened you, right? Is this the man?

MARK
No, he was ugly.

REGGIE
Oh Christ, Mark...

MARK
We can't tell anybody... he said he'd kill me and Mom and Ricky... he knows... he knows...

NOISE outside as Foltrigg arrives.

REGGIE
It's okay... It's gonna be okay... They're just bluffing.

MARK
I saw the knife, Reggie, and I ain't talking.

REGGIE
Shhhhh. Let me deal with these people.

Reggie opens the door to the outer office. Foltrigg beams when he sees Mark.

REGGIE
Clint? Can I see you?

Clint enters, as Reggie hides Mark behind the door.

REGGIE
(whispering to Clint)
Call the hospital, put some security round-the-clock outside of Ricky's room. Stay in here with Mark and keep the door locked.

Clint nods, and Reggie exits.

INT. REGGIE'S OFFICE - RECEPTION AREA - CONTINUOUS ACTION

Umbrellas, raincoats, wet. Foltrigg, McThune and Fink greet Reggie as she enters.

FOLTRIGG
Good morning, Ms. Love. Little Mark all ready?

REGGIE
Reggie. Roy, I'm sorry, but we have nothing to discuss.

FOLTRIGG
I think I didn't quite get that.

REGGIE
The meeting's been cancelled because we have nothing to say. I'm sorry to have inconvenienced you, but we've no choice. You cannot question my client.

FOLTRIGG
I don't believe I'm hearing this.

REGGIE
Like I said, I'm sorry.

FOLTRIGG
Ms. Love...

REGGIE
Reggie...

FOLTRIGG
We need to talk to your client. We think he knows something that will help us put a killer behind bars.

REGGIE
Such as?

FOLTRIGG
We have reason to believe that Jerome Clifford wanted to tell someone where his client, Mr. Muldanno, had disposed of the body of Senator Boyette. There are fingerprints inside the car that match Mark's, proving that he was in the car with Clifford prior to the shooting. We just want to question the kid under oath, properly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REGGIE
I sense a bit of desperation.

FOLTRIGG
A lot of desperation. I'm leveling with you. We know who killed the Senator, but, frankly, I'm not ready for trial without a corpse.

REGGIE
I'm not telling you that you cannot talk to Mark Sway. You cannot talk to him today. Not in this hasty manner. Let's take it one step at a time, okay?

FOLTRIGG
Okay.

REGGIE
Well, Roy, I think the big question is, how did you guys match his fingerprints?

INT. REGGIE'S OFFICE - MARK

listens at the door.

INT. OUTER OFFICE

REGGIE
How did you obtain one of his to match with the ones in the car?

McTHUNE
Very simple. We lifted one off a soft drink can at the hospital.

Everyone looks at McThune.

REGGIE
Did you ask either Mark Sway or his mother before doing so?

McThune shifts uncomfortably.

McTHUNE
No.

REGGIE
So you invaded the privacy of an eleven-year-old child.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

McTHUNE
We were just trying to obtain evidence...

REGGIE
Evidence? Evidence for what? He's committed no crime, I dare say. What else do you have?

FOLTRIGG
The kid has a bruise on his left cheekbone. We found a spot of blood on Clifford's right hand that's not his blood type.

REGGIE
Let me guess. It's Mark's blood type.

FOLTRIGG
Yes, it is.

REGGIE
And how did you obtain Mark's blood type?

McThune and Trumann look down at their shoes.

FOLTRIGG
From his brother's hospital admission records.

REGGIE
And how did you obtain his brother's 'confidential' hospital records?

FOLTRIGG
We have our ways.

Reggie points a finger at Foltrigg.

REGGIE
If you get near my client again and attempt to obtain anything from him without my permission, I'll sue you and the F.B.I. I'll file an ethics complaint with the state bars in Louisiana and Tennessee, and I'll haul your ass into juvenile court and ask the judge to lock you up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FOLTRIGG
Ms. Love. It's not in my nature to get unpleasant, but I just wanted to tell you, you're playing in the big leagues here. If you're going to take us to the mat, then we're gonna take you to the mat, too. You think I'd walk in here without checking you out? I know everything about you, Ms. Love. I know how your family walked out on you, and you turned to booze and drugs. I know how you had to drop out of law school, and spend a half year in an institution...

REGGIE
A treatment center! And I finished school.

INT. OFFICE - MARK

listening.

INT. OUTER OFFICE

FOLTRIGG
You've been practicing law for only two years! I don't think you've got what it takes, and I think you're gonna do this child more harm than good.

By now, Reggie is trying to hold back her emotions.

REGGIE
Well, I've done a little checking on you too, Roy, and perhaps you'd like to tell me how the boy's best interest isn't what you're really after. It's the political spotlight you wanna dance in. You care to tell us about how you watch videos of yourself over and over, how you've got that little power walk of yours practiced to perfection.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REGGIE (CONT'D)
Too busy to chat with the media, 'would love to stop and answer some questions,' but then hustle away, being a man of great importance not having the time. You've got floodlights stored in your office library for well-orchestrated press conferences. Hell, I've even heard you've got a little box of makeup locked in a cabinet. You're no lawyer, Roy, you're Liberace.

FOLTRIGG
(yelling at the top of his lungs)
This will not be the end of it! Ms. Love!

REGGIE
Is that a threat, Roy?

FOLTRIGG
More of a promise!

REGGIE
If you or your boys attempt to contact my client or his family, I'll have your asses.

EXT. ST. PETER'S HOSPITAL - DAY

It is RAINING TORRENTS. Reggie and Mark emerge from her car and head towards the hospital entrance. They are barraged by a band of soaked REPORTERS and television crews.

Flashbulbs pop. Floodlights glare.

REPORTER #1
Ms. Love! Ms. Love! Just a few quick questions!

REPORTER #2
It is true that your client is refusing to cooperate with the F.B.I. and the police?

Reggie takes Mark by the hand, and leans down to him.

CONTINUED:

REGGIE
(to Mark)
Don't look at them and don't say a word.

Reggie stands tall, and tries to walk by a television camera man.

REGGIE
No comment.

REPORTER #3
Is it true the U.S. Attorney from New Orleans was in your office?

REGGIE
No comment...

REPORTER #1
Did your client talk to Jerome Clifford before he died. Is it true he knows where Senator Boyette is buried?

Mark tries to stare straight ahead. The rain beats on his face.

REGGIE
No comment!

Slick Moeller suddenly comes up to Mark, leaning down with a tape recorder.

MOELLER
Hey, kid. How'd you like that story?

Mark looks up at Moeller, and pushes towards the doors of the hospital, tripping Slick and making him fall down into a puddle.

EXT. MEMPHIS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

It is raining.

A medium size jet lands at the airport.

INT. FORTH FLOOR ROOM OF RADISSON HOTEL - DOWNTOWN MEMPHIS - DAY

Paul Gronke sits on a bed playing with some cards, smoking a cigarette. Rain streaks the windows.

CONTINUED:

There is a KNOCK on the door. Gronke throws down the cards, and opens the door.

GRONKE
Bono!

BONO takes off his hat, and enters the room.

BONO
How you doin', Paully?

GRONKE
Guess they mean business bringin' you here.

BONO
Where's the kid?

GRONKE
He's still at the hospital with his mother and lawyer. We've got a private investigator named Jack Nance watchin' him.

BONO
Any sign of the feds?

GRONKE
Only a couple, watchin' the hospital same as we are. I gave the kid a warning yesterday, in an elevator. Now there's security near the room. But I don't think he told the Feds. If he did, they'd be crawling everywhere.

BONO
Well, who did he tell?

GRONKE
We're not sure.

BONO
This is the directive. We bug everything. Hospital room, lawyer's office, everything. We find out what the kid knows. If that doesn't work, we kill everybody.

INT. COURT LIBRARY - ROY FOLTRIGG'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Foltrigg, Trumann, McThune, Fink and Boxx pore through books.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FINK
There are two avenues, neither very attractive, but one or both might work. First, I suggest the Juvenile Court approach in Memphis. Under the Tennessee Youth Code, we petition the Juvenile Court alleging certain misconduct by the child. There are various categories of wrongdoing, and the petition must classify the child as a delinquent or a child in need of supervision. A hearing is held, the Juvenile Court Judge hears the proof and makes a determination as to what happens to the child. The same can be done for abused or neglected children. Same procedure, same court.

FOLTRIGG
Who files the petition?

FINK
Well, anyone. 'An interested party.'

FOLTRIGG
That can be us?

FINK
Yes. It depends on what we allege in our petition. The tricky part is we must allege the kid is breaking the law in some way.

FOLTRIGG
The kid knows where the body is. It's an obstruction of justice.

FINK
The good news is that all Juvenile Court proceedings are closed. If our plan doesn't bear fruit, it won't embarrass us.

FOLTRIGG
Sounds good to me. File a petition in Juvenile Court first thing tomorrow morning.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FOLTRIGG (CONT'D)
Now, if we're gonna play hardball with this kid, let's not forget the danger he's in. Muldanno is desperate. There are reporters everywhere. A leak here and a leak there, and the Mob could silence the kid before he talks.

FINK
Well, that brings us to our second option. We know Gronke is in Memphis, and it's safe to assume he's not there to visit Elivs' grave, right? He's been sent there by Muldanno. So I was thinking, what if we assume the kid is in danger, and we explain to the Juvenile Court Judge that it's in the best interest of the kid for us to take him into custody, you know, for his own protection?

FOLTRIGG
The kid goes to jail, and with Ms. Love's alcohol and drug problems, they both crack under the pressure.

INT. RICKY'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Ricky's condition seems unchanged. Reggie tries to calm Dianne, who looks like hell, and is extremely agitated as she indicates the hospital security guards at the door to the room. Mark watches.

DIANNE
... Guards and newspaper headlines and I don't know how I'm gonna pay you...

REGGIE
Don't worry about the money.

DIANNE
... 'cause my pig boss fired me this morning. I mean my baby's in a coma and he fires me.

Her eyes fill with tears. Mark feels awful.

REGGIE
For missing two days?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIANNE
No, 'cause I couldn't tell him how long I'd be out.

MARK
It's all my fault, Mom...

DIANNE
(hugging him)
Oh hush, honey... Wasn't much of a job anyways... six bucks an hour at a lamp factory... I always thought we'd wind up in a nice house with a walk-in closet.
(to Mark)
Honey, go ask Karen for some of them white pills.

Mark looks to Reggie unhappily as he runs off.

REGGIE
How long had you worked there?

DIANNE
Huh? Oh five years... where do the days go... I mean I had just started ministratin', the boys liked me and I was havin' a good time, and bang. I got pregnant and now I look around, and I'm twenty-seven, a failed marriage and I live in a trailer and my goddamn life is over.

REGGIE
Your life's not over.

Mark returns and reluctantly hands Dianne the pills.

REGGIE
Well, I better do my homework. Mark and I just declared war on Reverend Roy and the F.B.I. See you tomorrow... Good night, Mark...

She leaves as he follows her out into the:

HALL

MARK
'Night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Reggie turns. Mark looks so unhappy... so lost.

REGGIE
Got any plans for dinner?

EXT. ST. PETER'S CHARITY HOSPITAL - PARKING LOT - DUSK

Rain has stopped. Mark follows Reggie to her old beatup 1970 MG.

MARK
You think Mom and Ricky are safe?

REGGIE
Yes, don't worry about them. The hospital's gonna keep guards on 24 hours.

Reggie opens a door for Mark.

MARK
You're takin' me home 'cause you feel sorry for me doncha?

REGGIE
No, we have work to do.

MARK
I've never been in a car like this before.

REGGIE
Want the top down?

MARK
Yeah.

From around a corner, Jack Nance watches Reggie's car take off.

INT. REGGIE'S MG - TWILIGHT

Mark laughs as the highway wind streams through his hair.

MARK
Burn rubber, woman!

Reggie laughs as she shifts into fifth gear.

Reggie's MG zips down the highway.

EXT. MIDDLE CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD - EVENING

Reggie's car pulls into the driveway of a two-story house; it's a pleasant house with two distinguishing features -- a wide, gracious porch that runs the length of the front, and a yard filled with huge trees.

MARK
This is your house?

REGGIE
No, my momma's.

Reggie points to a two-story garage, the upper floor of which has three large windows.

REGGIE
That's where I live.

A handsome woman in her late sixties comes toward them holding a cat.

REGGIE
Mama, this is the client I told you about -- Mark Sway. Mark, my mother. Everybody calls her Mama Love.

Mark and MAMA LOVE shake hands.

REGGIE
Is it awful if I just go off and leave you two together for an hour or so? I need to do some research before I talk to Mark.

MAMA LOVE
Go on -- see if we care.
(re: cat)
This is Axle. He's seventeen years old, and very gentle. Ever meet a cat older than you are, Mark?

MARK
I don't know.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

A RADIO PLAYS a BALLAD from the late FORTIES. Mama Love sings along as she cooks. Mark sits on a stool, watching.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAMA LOVE
First boy I ever dated had that playing on his car radio when he kissed me: Russell Bennett.
(offhand; just rambling)
He put his tongue in my mouth, too. I thought '<u>What</u> in the <u>world</u>?...
(grins, focuses)
'Course, I learned to like it pretty quick.

MARK
You sure are different from Reggie. She's always so serious.

MAMA LOVE
What, don't you like her? She must like you -- she never brought a client home before.

MARK
I like her... I just mean she's <u>serious</u>.

MAMA LOVE
Regina's had some <u>blows</u>. Life's hit her hard -- you're too young to understand, I guess...
(studies him)
No, I guess you do understand. Come help me set the table.

Mark picks up a framed copy of the photo we saw earlier on Reggie's desk -- the outdoor candid shot of Reggie laughing with two young girls.

MARK
Who're these?

The woman hesitates a moment. Then, as Reggie approaches the living room, Mama Love gestures for him to put the photo back, mouths/stage whispers:

MAMA LOVE
We don't talk about that.

INT. COURT LIBRARY - PARALLEL TIME

Foltrigg and his guys are even more animated than before.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FOLTRIGG
... No, by God, I want that little bastard in court tomorrow!

McTHUNE
It takes a week, Foltrigg -- several days, minimum.

FOLTRIGG
(like a stone)
Tomorrow.
(a beat)
Twist arms. Break some arms if you have to, but speed this up. You guys can do it.

McTHUNE
Then I gotta start now.

FOLTRIGG
Go.

EXT. MAMA LOVE'S HOUSE (EERIE) - NIGHT

Reggie, Mark and Mama Love dine as CAMERA WATCHES them FROM across the street. It's someone's POV.

INT. GARAGE LOFT - NIGHT

Reggie's world. The space is nicely furnished. Reggie speaks to Mark quietly.

REGGIE
There's a thing called the Federal Witness Program. What that means is that if people see something that could put them in danger if they told about it, the government can protect them.

MARK
Yeah -- I saw that on TV once.

REGGIE
Right -- they give you and your family a new name, move you wherever you want to live. Get you a new house.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK
A real one? With a foundation? And could it have a walk-in closet? Like my mom said?

REGGIE
Yes. But you have to make up your mind how much you want to tell.

MARK
Could they make us safe?

REGGIE
Yes.

MARK
Totally safe?

REGGIE
Well, nothing's totally safe, I guess.

MARK
(disgusted)
Great.

REGGIE
Well, it's something for you to think about. See if you can get your mother to talk about it with you.

(picks up some papers)
Now, we're going to have to meet with Foltrigg sometime, and I want to go over this list of questions with you one more time...

Mark groans, slumps down on the sofa.

REGGIE
If you were so scared, why did you go back to the spot where the man had killed himself?

MARK
(listless; irritable)
To get the cigarette lighter I had dropped.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REGGIE
And that seemed an important enough reason?

MARK
It did then.

REGGIE
Why?

MARK
Why what?

REGGIE
Why did it seem important?

MARK
I said! I already said that: it seemed important 'cause it seemed important! God, what do you want me to say?

REGGIE
(more quietly)
Mark, they'll ask you these questions over and over, trying to confuse you, to make you mad, so you'll slip and say something.

MARK
Well, I don't give a damn. I'm tired of answering questions.

He gets up, walks to the TELEVISION, flicks it on and off and on and off and on and off and ON again. Now Reggie grows irritable.

REGGIE
Turn that off please.

Mark turns the VOLUME LOUDER.

REGGIE
Mark, please...

He turns it LOUDER. Reggie gets up, snaps OFF the SET.

REGGIE
Please sit down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK
I don't want to.

REGGIE
Well, you have to.

MARK
Oh, shut up.

REGGIE
No, you shut up.

Immediately, Reggie, hearing herself, stops. She looks up at the ceiling.

REGGIE
Wonderful. I'm arguing with an eleven-year-old.

MARK
(roving around the room)
Well, it's not fair. I have to answer questions all day, from everybody. Who are you and why'd you do this and what'd you think about that.
(loud)
You can all just go to hell.
(louder)
Why doesn't somebody else have to answer questions?

Well, it's not a logical question, but Mark's eleven and he's weary. He stands looking out a window. Reggie, calmer now, looks at Mark. Her face softens. She finds herself responding to this boy, and so she says something to him that is totally atypical of herself.

REGGIE
So you ask me something.

MARK
(not turning)
Like what?

REGGIE
Whatever you want. No rules, no limits. You ask, I'll answer.

MARK
(turns; now he's interested)
You mean anything?

CONTINUED:

REGGIE
Anything.

MARK
And you'll tell the truth?

REGGIE
If it takes the skin off.

It's clear Reggie means what she says. Mark looks at her, fascinated. He thinks for beat or two and then, with the unerring accuracy of a child, goes to the very heart of Reggie's life:

MARK
Who're those little girls with you in that picture? The one on your desk in your mother's living room?

Reggie's face jerks and she answers the question:

REGGIE
They're my daughters. They're older than you now. There was a divorce, and they live with their father.

MARK
Do you ever see them?

REGGIE
Not much. He's managed to turn them against me -- and it's partly my fault too -- for a while I wasn't a very good mother.

MARK
'Cause you was drunk and on drugs like he said this morning?

REGGIE
Because after the divorce I drank some. I drank a lot.

MARK
Why?

REGGIE
(sighs; this is hard)
Jesus.
(deep breath)
Let's see -- married to a big time doctor here in Memphis:
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REGGIE (CONT'D)
... expensive cars, mansion with pillars, fancy country club -- I put him through med school. Then after a few years he met this dancer, nineteen years old -- same old, same old -- Reggie hits the bottle, hits the kids. Couple suicide tries, public humiliation. Meantime, hubby hires a truckload of lawyers, gets her committed, steals the kids and wiggles out of alimony. He got everything: the house, the kids, the money. Only thing I got was that old car he'd spent years restoring. Broke his heart... So, I drank because I hurt. The only time I didn't hurt was when I drank, and so I...
(searches)
... drank and took pills. Sometimes. A lot of times.
(a beat)
But I got sober and stayed sober and got myself through law school and here we are... but I miss my daughters.

MARK
So that's why you work with kids?

REGGIE
Maybe.

It's obvious that Reggie has told the truth. Mark is captivated by this adult woman who is willing to speak so honestly. And, on Reggie's part, she has made herself more open to this boy than to anyone in a long time.

Mark leans against Reggie. She puts her arm around him, strokes his hair. After a long pause:

MARK
I'm so scared.

Reggie pulls him tighter against her.

INT. MOMA LOVE'S HOUSE - FIRST FLOOR - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Mark lies awake in bed. He cannot sleep. He gets up, and exits.

INT. MOMMA LOVE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mark, dressed in his underwear, walks over to the refrigerator, and takes out a bottle of milk. He goes over to a counter, and pours himself a glass.

Mark puts the bottle of milk away, and drinks his glass. He looks around the kitchen, with all it's old knick-knacks and pictures.

He walks over to an oil reproduction of Christ, shepherding the children of the world. The picture beckons to him in a strange way.

RACK FOCUS TO just beyond the screen window, a glowing cigarette in the dark shadows of the bushes outside.

Mark leaps back, and lets out a faint yelp. He stands silent, still, listening, looking, seeing if it was just his imagination, or if there really is somebody out there. Mark doesn't see anything. He slowly turns, and leaves the kitchen, turning off the dim light as he exits.

EXT. MOMMA LOVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT (SAME TIME)

From out of the dark shadows of the bushes peers Jack Nance. He has been looking through the windows of the kitchen.

EXT. SWAYS' TRAILER PARK - NIGHT

In the darkness, Bono and Gronke pack up their rental car, TURN ON the headlights and ENGINE, and drive away, leaving the Sways' trailer to stand alone in the blue, full moon night. CRICKETS CHIRP.

Suddenly, the trailer is enveloped by thick orange flames, and in a matter of seconds is a bright inferno. Like a pyre, the TRAILER RUMBLES. People emerge from the surrounding trailers, running everywhere.

EXT. ST. PETER'S CHARITY HOSPITAL - SIDE ENTRANCE - MORNING

Reggie's car pulls up to the loading dock entrance. Clint is standing there waiting for Mark and Reggie.

CLINT
We'll sneak through here. There's an army of reporters by the main entrance, and they're hungry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REGGIE
Clint will make sure you get to Ricky's room okay. I have a meeting. Just don't talk to anyone.

INT. RICKY'S HOSPITAL ROOM - SOON AFTER

Dianne looks up at Mark, tears streaming from her face.

MARK
What is it, Mom?

DIANNE
Our home... they burned down our home...

Mark stares at her in disbelief.

DR. GREENWAY
Mark, your trailer burned last night, just a few hours ago...

MARK
How bad?

DIANNE
Real bad. Everything's ruined! I've got no job, no house...!

Two men (DETECTIVE NASSAR and DETECTIVE KLICKMAN) appear.

NASSAR
Detective Nassar, Memphis P.D. This is Detective Klickman. Looking for Dianne Sway.

DIANNE
(wiping her face)
I'm Dianne Sway.

He holds some papers out to Dianne.

NASSAR
These are from Juvenile Court, Ms. Sway. It's a summons for a hearing at noon today.

CLINT
May I see those?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NASSAR
The summons requires us to take a Mark Sway into custody at this time.

DIANNE
What!?

CLINT
Let me see your badges...

DIANNE
You can't take my <u>son</u>! You son of a bitch!

MARK
Mom.

DIANNE
Over my dead body!

MARK
Mom...

CLINT
I better get Reggie.

Clint disappears.

NASSAR
We're just doing our job, Ms. Sway. Nothing's gonna happen to Mark. We'll take care of him.

They start to lead him into the hall.

DIANNE
What's he done? Just tell me what's he done? Can somebody help me here?

NASSAR
If you'll read these papers, Ms. Sway, you'll see that a petition has been filed because he won't cooperate with the police and F.B.I...

DIANNE
-- You can't have him!

MARK
Mom, please...

CONTINUED:

NASSAR
Look, Ms. Sway, you have no choice. We have to take your son.

She jumps in front of them.

DIANNE
If you take him, you'll have to get past me.

MARK
It's okay, Mom. I'll go. Call Reggie and tell her to meet me at the jail. She'll probably sue these clowns by lunch and have them fired by tomorrow.

Nassar reaches for Mark and grabs him by the arm. Dianne screams and slaps Nassar across the face.

DIANNE
Don't touch him!

Klickman instantly grabs Dianne, making her lose her balance, and they fall to the floor. His wallet falls out of his pocket and credit cards scatter.

DIANNE
You son of a bitch!

MARK
Mom!

They all turn, and see Ricky standing at the door. The noise has woken him. He begins to shriek, crying uncontrollably at the sight of his mother entangled with the F.B.I. guys.

Mark leaps to help his mother, when Klickman drags him away from the fracas.

NASSAR
Let's go, kid.

Dianne screams. It is chaos. Klickman tries to collect his cards.

EXT. HOSPITAL - SOON AFTER

Mark is led through a gauntlet of press by Nassar and Klickman.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK
They're taking me to jail! I'm eleven years old, and they hit my mother!

KLICKMAN
Shut up, kid!

MARK
They didn't even read my rights!

INT. MEMPHIS YMCA - SAME TIME

... in which an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting is being held. Some twenty people are sitting, drinking coffee, smoking (the air is blue with it) listening as Reggie's raised hand is acknowledged by the leader.

REGGIE
Hi, I'm Reggie. I'm an alcoholic...

GROUP
Hi, Reggie.

REGGIE
I'm having a rough week. I, uh, took this case, this kid came in, and it's a hot case, I got to be real honest here, I said to myself, this is my big case. My 'Amy Fisher,' my 'Klaus Von Bulow.' I'm gonna be the lady lawyer of the Nineties. I'm gonna be on 'Sixty Minutes,' I'll be fabulous in court, dressed like Glenn Close in Jagged Edge, and, and I'll just... do my number and walk out triumphant, in a flash of, you know, photographers. But what I realize, is that I've got this boy. And his brother, and his mother, and you know, I've got this responsibility, and things are just getting bigger and bigger, and I'm really nervous, 'cause I don't know where this is all leading. This is not what I thought it was going to be.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REGGIE (CONT'D)
I'm worried that, when push comes to shove... I don't know if I've got what it takes to go the distance here, and I'm scared that when this kid really needs me, or when it's really gonna take my all, that just like my husband, just like my children, that I won't be there for him... I'll bail or worst of all be in some bar... I'm scared... I'm scared shitless...

Suddenly she sees Clint waving to her from outside the room.

HALLWAY - SECONDS LATER

Reggie and Clint running.

CLINT
Mark's been picked up! He's in custody!

REGGIE
What?

CLINT
Foltrigg. He filed a petition and Harry Roosevelt's scheduled a hearing for noon.

REGGIE
NOON! That's fifty-six minutes from now. There's three to seven days after filing a petition, not three to seven hours!
(through gritted teeth)
Oh, that Foltrigg -- he's fed Roosevelt a bunch of bullshit!

EXT. MEMPHIS JAIL - ESTABLISHING - MORNING

INT. MEMPHIS JAIL - ENTRY

A black woman officer (DOREEN) stands behind a desk with a clipboard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOREEN
Empty your pockets. Put the contents in this metal container.

Mark pulls some change and a piece of gum out of his pocket.

DOREEN
Okay. Now follow me.

Mark begins to follow her down a hall.

MARK
Aren't you gonna fingerprint me?

DOREEN
Of course not.

Mark looks around as he walks. He sees some female prisoners milling about.

MARK
What kind of place is this?

DOREEN
It's a women's detention hall.

MARK
What? Why am I being put in with the women?

DOREEN
'Cause you're a minor.

MARK
I don't want to be treated like a child! I demand my rights! Put me where the men are.

DOREEN
Listen, we get all kinds of smart mouths up here, okay? You'll get along much better if you'll just keep your mouth shut.

Doreen leads Mark down the hall to a door. She opens the door, which leads to --

EMPTY CELL WING - CONTINUOUS ACTION

comprised of three cells and a small hall.

CONTINUED:

DOREEN
This is where you stay for now.

MARK
Is this what they mean by 'solitary'?

DOREEN
No. You can have any bed you want. Walls are cinderblock and the windows are unbreakable, so don't try anything. You can watch a little T.V. in here if you want to.

Mark stands sullenly.

DOREEN
Are you okay, Mark?

Mark looks up at her.

MARK
Can I call my mother? Just to tell her I'm okay? She's worried sick.

This makes Doreen smile. She realizes this kid's different from all her other inmates -- he looks so innocent.

DOREEN
Well, okay, I'll run a phone in here for you, I suppose we can make a little exception.

INT. CELL BLOCK

Mark sits in a corner, a phone receiver up to his ear, and an open phone book on his lap.

PHONE (V.O.)
Brother's Pizza...

MARK
(deepening his voice)
Uh, yes, I'd like to order twenty of your large supremes.

PHONE (V.O.)
Okay...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK
Yes. Need them delivered at noon.

PHONE (V.O.)
Name?

MARK
I'm ordering them for Detective Klickman, North Precinct.

PHONE (V.O.)
Oh, we've delivered there before, believe me. How would you like to pay for this?

MARK
Oh, uh...

Mark pulls out one of the credit cards that Detective Klickman dropped in the hospital.

MARK
Master Card! The number is 5555 3567 9827 0021.

PHONE (V.O.)
That'll be two hundred and forty-eight dollars and ten cents.

MARK
Fine.

INT. CHEAP NEW ORLEANS BOARDING ROOM - BATHROOM

AMBER, a buxom stripper, stands in the bathroom as Barry Muldanno takes a shower. She is holding the phone in her hand.

AMBER
Barry! It's Gronke!

Muldanno rips the shower curtain open, and grabs the phone, water dripping everywhere.

MULDANNO
Yeah? What? The cops got 'im???

INT. MEMPHIS RADISSON INN - GRONKE'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Gronke is speaking on the phone. Bono and Nance are standing in the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GRONKE
Happened less than thirty minutes ago. They took him straight to jail. They had to file something on youth court.

MULDANNO
Listen, you worthless piece of shit! I want those damned records. I want your boys to keep watching him. If they move him anywhere, I wanna know it immediately. If they take him to court, I wanna know it. I don't want to hear any more pussy-toed excuses!

GRONKE
This is not New Orleans, Barry, and this is not just some little punk you can rub out and make everything jake. This kid's got baggage. People are watching him. If you do something stupid, you'll have a hundred Fibbies all over your ass. You won't be able to breathe, and Bono and I will rot in jail.
(hands the phone to Bono)
He wants to talk to you.

Bono walks over, takes the phone from Gronke, and listens.

BONO
Yeah?

Bono listens.

BONO
Right...

Bono suddenly slugs Gronke across the face with the telephone receiver. Bono then holds the phone out to Gronke again.

BONO
The Blade wants to know if you got the message.

INT. MEMPHIS JUVENILE COURT BUILDING - HARRY ROOSEVELT'S OFFICE - LATE MORNING

Reggie enters Judge Harry Roosevelt's office, filled with fishing photos, paraphernalia, etc.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRY ROOSEVELT, a sharp black man in his early 40s, looks up from his desk.

HARRY
Good morning, Reggie. Not surprised to see you here. How are you?

REGGIE
Fine thanks, Harry. How's the fishing?

HARRY
Marvelous.

REGGIE
You didn't have to sign a custody order. I would've brought him here, Harry, you know that. He's in good hands. Why so fast? I haven't prepared!

HARRY
Reggie, Reggie. You never believe your clients should be taken into custody. According to the F.B.I., little Mark Sway could be in a world of danger.

REGGIE
What'd they tell you?

HARRY
It'll come out during the hearing in an hour. Just be patient for once.

REGGIE
They must have been pretty convincing, Harry. I get an hour's notice of the hearing...

HARRY
Thought you'd like that. We can do it tomorrow if you'd like. I don't mind making Mr. Foltrigg and the F.B.I. wait.

REGGIE
Not with Mark in custody. Release him to me.

CONTINUED:

HARRY
I'm afraid to release him. According to the F.B.I. there are some very dangerous people now in the city who may want to shut him up. Do you know a Mr. Gronke, and his pal Bono. Ever hear of these guys?

REGGIE
No.

HARRY
Neither had I, until this morning. It seems that these gentlemen have arrived in our fair city from New Orleans, and that they're close associates of Mr. Barry Muldanno, or 'The Blade,' as I believe he's known down there. This scares me, Reggie, really scares me. These men do not play games.

REGGIE
Well it scares me, too, but I've arranged security at the hospital.

HARRY
Has he been threatened?

REGGIE
Yes. But I don't think the code gives you the authority to order custody of children who may be in danger.

HARRY
Reggie, dear, I wrote the code. I can issue a custody order for any child alleged to be delinquent. He won't talk. So, what does the kid know?

REGGIE
You know it's privileged, Harry.

HARRY
So, he knows more than he should.

Reggie says nothing... then.

REGGIE
He's a great kid, Harry, remarkable really. He's never had a break. Please help him, Harry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRY
I knew it. One of them finally got to you.

REGGIE
Will you help us, Harry?

INT. JUVENILE COURT BUILDING - WITNESS ROOM C - SHORTLY LATER

Reggie sits opposite Mark in the small room. Mark is beginning to look scared and sad.

REGGIE
You're here because they think you know something valuable, and the law says every person has a duty to assist officials in the course of their investigation.

MARK
The law is stupid.

REGGIE
Maybe so, but we can't change it today.

Mark begins to rock forward in his chair.

MARK
Reggie?

REGGIE
Yes?

MARK
I've been thinkin'.

REGGIE
What?

MARK
Why can't I just tell them I know nothing? Why can't I say that me and old Romey talked about suicide and going to heaven and hell, you know, stuff like that?

REGGIE
Tell lies?

Mark smiles.

MARK
Yeah. It'll work, you know. Nobody knows the truth but Romey, me and you. Right? And Romey, bless his heart, ain't talkin'.

REGGIE
You can't lie in court, Mark.

Mark doesn't understand.

MARK
What do you mean? It's easy. They do it all the time.

REGGIE
I cannot allow you to lie to the court. You'll be under oath, so you must tell the truth and then we can enter you and your family in the witness protection program.

MARK
Then it was a mistake to hire you, I guess.

REGGIE
I don't think so.

MARK
Sure it was. You're making me tell the truth, and the truth might get me killed. If you weren't around, I'd march in there and lie my little butt off and me and Mom and Ricky would all be safe...

REGGIE
You can fire me if you want.

MARK
Okay. You're fired!

There is a long pause. Reggie picks up her things.

REGGIE
Okay. The court will appoint you another lawyer. Good luck, Mark.

Reggie stands and leaves. She feels awful.

MARK
Reggie!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Reggie stops.

MARK
I don't want another lawyer.

Reggie turns, and looks back at Mark.

INT. JUVENILE COURT - DAY

Judge Harry Roosevelt sits behind his large desk, facing the small group of people in the locked courtroom.

A shifty-looking BAILIFF brings some papers from the desk, and hands them to Fink, who sits at a large table facing the Judge with Foltrigg, McThune, Trumann, Boxx.

Mark and Reggie sit at another table near them.

HARRY
For the record, I note the child is present along with counsel, and that the child's mother, who is alleged to be his custodial parent, was served with a copy of the petition and a summons this morning. However, the child's mother is not present in the courtroom and this concerns me.

Fink stands up quickly.

FINK
Your Honor, if I may, for the record, I'm Thomas Fink, Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

Harry looks skeptically at Fink.

FINK
I am one of the petitioners in this matter, and if I may, I would like to address the issue of the absence of the child's mother.

Harry leans forward, never breaking his gaze.

FINK
Your Honor, it's our position, the position of the petitioners...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRY
Your position, Mr. Fink, is in that chair right there. Please sit, and listen to me very carefully, because I will only say this once. And if I have to say it again, I will do so as they are putting you in handcuffs and taking you away for a night in our splendid jail.

Fink, shocked, falls into his seat.

FOLTRIGG
Now, now, Judge Roosevelt.

HARRY
And as for you, Mr. Foltrigg, this is not some fancy courtroom in New Orleans, and I am not one of your federal judges. This is my little private courtroom, and I make the rules. Rule number one is that you speak only in my courtroom when you are spoken to. Rule number two is that you do not grace His Honor with unsolicited speeches, comments or remarks. Rule number three is that His Honor does not like to hear the voices of lawyers, especially U.S. Attorneys who love to hear themselves talk! Do you understand these rules, gentlemen?

They nod.

HARRY
Mr. Foltrigg?

FOLTRIGG
Yes, Your Honor?

HARRY
I understand you want Mr. Fink to handle this case for the prosecution.

FOLTRIGG
Yes sir, Your Honor, sir. If it pleases the court, sir.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRY
I'll allow it. But try to keep his butt in his seat.

Foltrigg rolls his eyes as Mark cracks a grin.

HARRY
Please proceed, Ms. Love.

Reggie takes off her glasses and addresses Harry from behind her table.

REGGIE
The child moves this court to dismiss the petition filed against him on the grounds that the allegations are without merit and the petition has been filed in an effort to explore things the child might know.

MARK
(to Reggie)
Stop calling me a child.

HARRY
(to Mark)
Quiet! Young man! Proceed.

REGGIE
Mr. Foltrigg and Mr. Fink are using this hearing as a fishing expedition for their desperate criminal investigation. Their petition is a hopeless mishmash of maybe's and what if's, and filed under oath without the slightest hint of the real truth. They're desperate, Your Honor, and they're here shooting in the dark hoping they hit something. The petition should be dismissed, and we should all go home.

Harry glares down at Fink.

HARRY
I'm inclined to agree with her, Mr. Fink. What about it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suddenly Foltrigg blurts out, standing.

FOLTRIGG
Beggin' your pardon, Your Honor. We feel the petition is much like an indictment. Its truth cannot be ascertained without a hearing, and if we can get on with it, we can prove our allegations! Your Honor.

Foltrigg sits down. Harry turns to Reggie.

HARRY
Anything else, Ms. Love?

REGGIE
Not at this time.

HARRY
Mr. Fink. You may proceed.

FINK
Well, Your Honor, this may sound a bit strange, but we feel that, due to the unusual circumstances of this case, the child should take the stand and testify.

Harry rips off his glasses.

HARRY
You what?

FINK
We, uh, feel that --

HARRY
Mr. Fink, have you studied the juvenile laws for this jurisdiction?

FINK
I -- I have.

HARRY
The child cannot be force to testify, same as any other criminal or juvenile court proceeding. Surely you understand this?

CONTINUED:

FINK
Your Honor, the child is the only witness. He is the last person to see Jerome Clifford alive. We've established Jerome Clifford as a source of vital information concerning the disappearance of Senator Boyd Boyette in our petition. We've established the child lied about his involvement with Clifford's death. We are asking that the child testify. We are not forcing the child to testify. Not at this time, anyway.

Harry looks at Reggie.

HARRY
Ms. Love, will you 'allow' your client to testify?

Reggie pauses, then looks at Mark, who sits silent, confused.

REGGIE
That's up to my client.

Foltrigg and Harry watch Reggie confer with her client.

REGGIE
My client will testify, but I will not tolerate abusive questioning by Mr. Fink.

FINK
Your Honor, please...

HARRY
Quiet, Mr. Fink. Remember rule number one? Don't speak until spoken to!

Harry smiles at Mark.

HARRY
Mark, I want you to remain in your seat, next to your lawyer, while I ask you some questions. Raise your right hand, Mark.

Mark begins to tremble with fear, and lifts his hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARRY
Do you swear to tell the truth?

Mark nods.

HARRY
Okay, now, Mr. Fink is going to ask you some questions. He'll keep the questions clear and simple. If you need a break to step outside and talk to Reggie, Ms. Love, just let me know, okay?

MARK
Yes sir.

Fink turns in his chair, and faces Mark like a hungry puppy.

FINK
Now, Mark, I want you to explain to me exactly how you and your brother discovered Mr. Clifford on Monday.

MARK
We sneaked off into the woods behind the trailer park, to smoke a cigarette.

FINK
What'd you do then?

MARK
The car pulled up, we hid. The man tried to kill himself with a hose in the tail pipe. I pulled it out, he found me.

FINK
Were you forced into the car with Mr. Clifford before he died?

Mark pauses.

MARK
Yessir.

Foltrigg is joyous.

FINK
And what did he do once he got you in the car?

CONTINUED:

MARK
Well, he slapped me some more, yelled at me a few times, threatened me...

FINK
You talked with Clifford when you were in the car?

MARK
Yessir.

FINK
What did he say?

MARK
He was out of his mind, kept talking about floating off to La-La Land, then he would yell at me for crying, then he would apologize for hitting me.

FINK
That's all he said?

MARK
What do you mean?

FINK
Did Mr. Clifford say anything else?

Mark doesn't say anything.

FINK
Mark, I asked you if Mr. Clifford said anything else.

MARK
Like what?

FINK
Like, did he mention anything about Senator Boyd Boyette? Did Mr. Clifford mention anything about a case of his in New Orleans involving a Mr. Barry Muldanno or the late Senator Boyd Boyette?

Mark looks at Reggie. She smiles at him, he's doing fine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK
I don't think I want to answer that question...

Reggie grins.

FINK
Mark, look at me. I want you to answer the question. Did Mr. Clifford mention Barry Muldanno or Boyd Boyette?

MARK
Can I take the Fifth Amendment?

FINK
No!

MARK
Why not? It applies to kids, doesn't it?

FINK
Yes, but not in this sitution. You're not implicated in the death of Senator Boyette. You're not implicated in any crime.

MARK
Then why put me in jail?

FINK
I'm going to send you back there if you don't answer my questions.

REGGIE
Objection, Your Honor.

MARK
I take the Fifth anyway.

Reggie leans back, proud of Mark.

FINK
Would you like to talk to your attorney in private?

MARK
We've already talked. You can send me back to jail if you like, but I can't say anything more.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FINK
Did Mr. Clifford say anything about the murder of Boyd Boyette?!

MARK
I take the Fifth.

FINK
I'm ordering you to answer these questions!

MARK
Yessir. I'm sorry. But I cannot answer these questions because I'm afraid of what might happen to me or my family.

Harry and Reggie look at each other across the courtroom.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE HARRY ROOSEVELT'S COURTROOM - LATER

People are leaving, the trial is over, it's the end of the day.

The Bailiff finishes locking the doors, and walks down the hall towards the men's room.

INT. MEN'S ROOM

The Bailiff walks over to a urinal, and starts to take a piss.

He is standing near another man, who is also pissing. The man is Jack Nance.

BAILIFF
We alone?

NANCE
Yep. What happened?

BAILIFF
Kid wouldn't talk, so he's going back to jail. They're calling it contempt, but old Harry just wants to keep 'im safe.

NANCE
What does he know?

CONTINUED:

BAILIFF
I'd say he knows everything. The kid took the Fifth Amendment. Tough little bastard.

NANCE
But he knows?

BAILIFF
Oh sure. But he's not telling. Judge wants him back tomorrow at noon to see if a night in the slammer changes his mind.

The Bailiff zips up his pants and steps away from the urinal.

BAILIFF
You didn't hear it from me.

Nance hands him a folded 100 dollar bill.

INT. ANTOINE'S RESTAURANT (NEW ORLEANS) - NIGHT

Muldanno heads through the front door, and walks through the crowded restaurant. He reaches the back, where in a secluded booth sits Johnny Sulari.

Muldanno nods to a waiter, grins at a thug, and moves over to Johnny, who is dining with a bimbo. Johnny sends her away, and waves him to take a seat, which he does obediently.

SULARI
What is it?

MULDANNO
Just talked to Gronke in Memphis.

The beautiful Waitress comes over to the table, and puts down a new pair of salt and pepper shakers, and a bottle of ketchup.

WAITRESS
What can I get you, Mr. Muldanno?

MULDANNO
Beer, Grolsch. Thank you, gorgeous.

The Waitress leaves.

CONTINUED:

MULDANNO
The kid's in jail, and he ain't talkin'...

SULARI
You're a dumbass, Barry, you know that?

MULDANNO
We've had this conversation.

SULARI
I know, and we'll have it again. You're a dumbass, and I just want you to know that I think you're a dumbass.

Muldanno rolls his eyes.

MULDANNO
Okay. So I'm a dumbass. But we need to make a move, Uncle Johnny.

SULARI
What kind of 'move'?

From the rear of the crowded restaurant, Special Agent Scherff watches Muldanno and Sulari talk.

He moves through the cluster of tables, and sinks back towards the steamy kitchen.

INT. RESTAURANT KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Scherff walks over to ANOTHER AGENT, and the two of them head back through to a small little office.

The Beautiful Waitress stands there.

SCHERFF
Thanks sweetheart.

WAITRESS
Any time.

INT. OFFICE BEHIND RESTAURANT KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Scherff and the other Agent join a THIRD AGENT, who is sitting at a small recording console that is picking up Muldanno's conversation.

AGENT
We're picking it up just fine.

INT. RESTAURANT - SAME TIME

The salt and pepper shakers sit between Muldanno and Sulari, but we know now they're bugged.

MULDANNO
The little bastard knows something. Why would he clam up like this? This kid scares me. He's told his lawyer, so that makes two more who know now.

SULARI
Yeah, but he ain't talkin', Barry. Think about it. We got to him. We took care of the trailer. The kid is scared to death.

MULDANNO
We can hit the kid. There are ways.

SULARI
We can't hit the kid. Everybody's watching him right now. A million cops'll hound us to our graves. It won't work.

INT. OFFICE - SAME TIME

The F.B.I. Agents, listening to the conversation over earphones.

MULDANNO (V.O.)
What about his mother or his brother? What about his lawyer?

SULARI (V.O.)
Why would you kill her?

MULDANNO (V.O.)
Maybe I hate lawyers. Maybe it'll scare the kid so bad he'll go into a coma like his brother. I don't know.

SULARI (V.O.)
The kid'll just get another lawyer.

MULDANNO (V.O.)
We'll kill the next one, too. Think about it. This could do wonders for the legal profession. No lawyer in his right mind would represent him. Get it?

INT. RESTAURANT - SAME TIME

Sulari looks sad.

SULARI
You're losin', it Barry, you're crackin' up.

MULDANNO
We're breakin' into Reggie Love's office tonight, fixin' her phones.

SULARI
Are they protecting her?

MULDANNO
I don't think so.

INT. OFFICE - SAME TIME

Scherff and the Agents look at each other.

SCHERFF
Get me Roy Foltrigg on the phone. And we better warn this Reggie Love person.

EXT. STERICK BUILDING - LATE NIGHT

The Sterick building stretches up to the full moon like a monolith.

INT. STERICK BUILDING - REGGIE'S OFFICE - LATE NIGHT

Reggie's office is still and silent in the darkness.

Suddenly, the DOORKNOB turns with a CLICK. The door opens slowly.

In steps Jack Nance. He looks around. He is breathing, nervous.

In the darkness, Jack Nance has Reggie's telephone flipped over. He is planting a bug. He has a hard time adjusting his screwdriver in the dark.

INT. JAIL - OUTER HALLWAY - NIGHT

Doreen lumbers down the hallway.

She takes out her ring of keys, and heads towards Mark's cell.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She looks into the window of Mark's cell.

Doreen gasps at what she sees through the window.

INT. REGGIE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Nance finishes with one phone, and scrambles over to the next.

INT. JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER - NIGHT

Doreen scrambles to open Mark's door.

She sees Mark lying on the floor. He is wet with sweat, shaking, and unconscious.

DOREEN
Mark! Mark! Oh my God!

Doreen leaps down to help Mark.

DOREEN
Telda! Call the doctor!

INT. REGGIE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Nance begins to work on bugging another phone, when all of a sudden --

All of the lights flip on.

Nance squints in the bright light.

Two uniformed policemen, Lieutenant Byrd, and Clint are in the room.

Nance is caught, frozen, speechless.

BYRD
Evenin', Jack. Think now's a good time to discuss your parole?

Jack drops the phone to the floor, defeated.

INT. MARK'S CELL

Doreen touches the sweat on Mark's stomach. TELDA, another female guard, rushes to the door.

DOREEN
Damn! He's soaking wet!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TELDA
The poor kid's in shock, isn't he? Just like his brother!

DOREEN
Get a towel over here!

Telda rushes out as the DOCTOR rushes in.

DOCTOR
What's going on?

DOREEN
The kid's in shock!

The Doctor starts to frantically examine Mark.

DOCTOR
Damn, his heart is about to explode! He might be in arrest! Get an ambulance now!

INT. ST. PETER'S CHARITY HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY WARD - NIGHT

It is chaos.

Nurses and doctors and patients are everywhere. Mark is wheeled in on a stretcher through double doors. Paramedics wheel him to the admittance area. A NURSE greets him.

NURSE
What have we got here?

PARAMEDIC
Looks like stress or shock or something. He's from juvenile court.

The Nurse looks at the form.

NURSE
So he's not bleeding or anything?

PARAMEDIC
No...

NURSE
This is a war zone, fellas. He should be taken to psychiatric, not here. He can wait five minutes. Wheel him over there, we'll be with him shortly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PARAMEDIC
Sign the form, lady, and he's all yours.

She signs.

NURSE
Where's the police?

PARAMEDIC
He's just a juvenile.

The Paramedics are gone. Mark is left alone among the frantic activity of the emergency room.

He has managed to curl himself up in the fetal position. Mark's eyes slowly open, and he takes his thumb out of his mouth. He looks around.

He is conscious, and fully aware.

Nobody has any time to pay attention to him. Mark sees his chance, and sits up. He unbuckles himself from the stretcher gurney, and leaps off.

Mark runs quickly to the stairwell, and nobody has seen him leave.

INT. HOSPITAL STAIRWELL - SAME TIME

Mark bounds up the stairs, two at a time.

INT. NINTH FLOOR WARD OUTSIDE OF RICKY'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Mark sneaks a peek from the stairwell entrance, down the hall from Ricky's room.

The floor is sparsely populated. Mark can see the two guards sitting by Ricky's room. Mark stands there, not knowing what his next move should be. Then, he sees --

Dianne exits the room. She walks out past the guards, and stops, pausing to light a cigarette. He wants his mother to see him, but at the same time can't risk being caught by the guards, or anybody else.

Mark slowly turns, and suddenly finds himself standing down the hallway from Paul Gronke, who has just exited the elevator.

Gronke sees him. Lightning fast, Mark slams himself throught he stairwell door just to his right.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

... the murkier light of a stairwell. He races down a flight of stairs, with Gronke right behind him. Taking the stairs two at a time, he races...

... past the fifth floor exit...

... and past the fourth floor exit...

... and past the third floor exit...

... and past the first floor exit...

... and to the basement levels, where he pushes through the green door and into...

INT. BASEMENTS

The DOOR SCRAPES again as Gronke pursues. Stumbling over the coils of wire and old rope, Gronke opens his truly horrifying knife (it has a serrated edge), and begins to stalk the steamy bowels of the cellars looking for Mark.

Walking with his knees bent, ready to jump in any direction that Mark might appear, Gronke passes by...

... the six-foot-high pile of rolled tarpaper...
... the jumble of scaffolding used for window washing...
... the drums of plasma...
... the pallet of old bricks...

... but he sees nothing, hears nothing. Finally, Gronke calls softly.

GRONKE
Mark, I don't really want to hurt you -- come on out; I just want to talk to you.

And then, as if from nowhere, Gronke sees Mark spring from the shadows, towards a dim hallway. Gronke gives chase.

INT. MORGUE

Gronke springs into the dark room. A couple of bodies await being tagged. Then, beyond the rows of body drawers is --

A large refrigerator door, left open. Gronke looks around, and sees that there is no other place for Mark to hide.

CONTINUED:

GRONKE
Okay, kid. I know you're in there.

Gronke walks over to the refrigerator which is dark on the inside. Gronke flips on a light, and sees rows of bodies.

GRONKE
Nothing personal, kid.

Gronke enters.

In the main room, Mark uncovers himself from a body cloth, and leaps off a table, and with all his might, hurls himself at the refrigerator door.

Gronke hears the door shut behind him.

Mark locks the door, sealing Gronke off from the rest of the world. Mark, breathing heavily, can hear GRONKE'S MUTED SCREAMS from behind the metal door.

EXT. MOMMA LOVE'S HOUSE - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

Some police cars sit in front of Momma Love's house.

INT. MOMMA LOVE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Reggie, Clint, and Momma Love sit uncomfortably in the kitchen. Momma Love looks over towards the front door of her house, at the two uniformed cops standing there, talking to each other.

MOMMA LOVE
Why do I feel like a prisoner?

REGGIE
Momma. Let's just relax.

MOMMA LOVE
It's not every day the mob puts a contract out on you.

REGGIE
All we have to do is stay calm.

The TELEPHONE RINGS, and the three of them jump a mile. They look at each other. Reggie gets it.

REGGIE
Yes?

CONTINUED:

MARK (V.O.)
Reggie? It's me! I've escaped!

Reggie is in shock. She looks at the cops, who have pressed their ears to the screen door to listen in on who she's talking to.

REGGIE
Velma! What a time to call!

Clint looks at Momma Love.

CLINT
(mouthing)
Who's 'Velma'?

Reggie takes the phone call around the corner, for some privacy.

REGGIE
(whispering harshly)
Mark! What the hell is going on?!

INT. ST. PETER'S HOSPITAL - MORGUE - SAME TIME

MARK
I'm not in jail anymore. I escaped. I'm at St. Peter's.

REGGIE (V.O.)
What! How?

INT. MOMMA LOVE'S - SAME TIME

Reggie calms herself.

REGGIE
I see. And how did you get there, dear?

INT. ST. PETER'S HOSPITAL - MORGUE - SAME TIME

MARK
By ambulance. I faked an attack of Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, and they rushed me over.

REGGIE (V.O.)
Are you okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK
I recovered real fast. I faked them out. I jogged in place real fast for half an hour, and when they found me I was soaking wet. I walked out of the emergency room, and here I am. I escaped! It was so easy.

INT. MOMMA LOVE'S - SAME TIME

REGGIE
Mark, listen. You find a cop now! We are all in danger! You and me! Believe me!

INT. ST. PETER'S HOSPITAL - MORGUE - SAME TIME

MARK
I'm not going back to jail, and I'm not going to see the grand jury in New Orleans. They'll just lock me up down there...

REGGIE (V.O.)
Listen, Mark, you can't do this...

MARK
It's done, and I'm not going back!

INT. MOMMA LOVE'S - NIGHT

REGGIE
What room are you in?

Clint joins her.

INT. ST. PETER'S HOSPITAL - MORGUE - NIGHT

MARK
Are you still my lawyer?

REGGIE (V.O.)
Of course I'm your lawyer.

MARK
Then you can't repeat anything I tell you.

REGGIE (V.O.)
Mark!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK
Are you my friend? 'Cause if you are, you're the only one I've got.

REGGIE (V.O.)
Yes, Mark. Where are you?

MARK
You know the back parking lot, the one next to that big green building. I'll be hiding between some parked cars.

INT. MOMMA LOVE'S - SAME TIME

REGGIE
I'll be in Clint's car. A black Honda.

She hangs up.

CLINT
My car?

REGGIE
They'll be looking for me, too. I need your keys, and your credit cards.

CLINT
Look, I love you, Reggie, but my car and my plastic.

REGGIE
How much cash do you have?

CLINT
Forty bucks, but...

REGGIE
Give it to me. I'll pay you back.

He hands everything over to her.

CLINT
You can't run away with an escaped, I don't know, whatever the hell he is. They'll arrest you for contributing. You'll be indicted. Lose your license. It's crazy. Insane. You've lost your mind.

CONTINUED:

REGGIE
I've lost it before. Take care of Momma Love. Stay by the phone. I'll call you later.

They embrace.

CLINT
Take it easy with the Visa. It's almost to the limit.

INT. JASON MCTHUNE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The TELEPHONE RINGS. McThune wakes, reaches over his fat wife sleeping next to him, and answers.

MCTHUNE
Hello?
(listens)
Pardon me?

His mouth drops.

EXT. ST. PETER'S - NIGHT

Cops and cop cars everywhere.

Reggie drives Clint's car through all the madness into the --

BACK PARKING LOT

Reggie avoids the chaos as Mark races through parked cars and with police all around, Reggie opens the door and Mark daringly jumps in.

INT. CAR

Reggie pushes Mark's head down.

REGGIE
On the floor, get down.

Boldly, they drive through the mayhem and away from the hospital.

REGGIE
Your mother must be frantic!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK
I called her from the morgue, explained everything. Told her we were going to fix everything.

REGGIE
We?

MARK
You're an accomplice now, aren't you?

ANOTHER ANGLE

The LIMO SCREECHES to a halt, and Foltrigg, McThune, Fink, Trumann and Boxx dash toward the hospital entrance.

MCTHUNE
We're watching the mother's room in case he tries to get to her.

FOLTRIGG
Has anyone questioned her yet?

MCTHUNE
No, sir, you said you wanted to be the first.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Reggie drives Clint's car.

INT. CAR

Feeling safer now, Mark sits up in the passenger seat.

MARK
I like your car better.

Reggie stops for a red light. Suddenly a cop car stops next to them. The cop behind the wheel looks over to Mark.

REGGIE
(hissing)
Don't look at him.

The light changes and Reggie makes a left. The cop follows.

CONTINUED:

REGGIE
Don't turn around. Just act normal.

MARK
Why is he following us? He musta recognized me from the papers.

REGGIE
Just be cool.

The cop car pulls alongside and then passing them, speeds up and out of sight.

REGGIE
He's gone!

INT. RICKY'S ROOM

Ricky sleeps while Dianne faces Foltrigg, McThune, Fink, Trumann and Boxx.

DIANNE
What do you mean Mark is missing? You mean to say, you lost him?

FOLTRIGG
Has he tried to contact you tonight?

DIANNE
(lying)
No... Have you searched the hospital? He knows it real well, you know?

MCTHUNE
We can't find Reggie Love either. She's not at home and her mother ain't sayin' much. Do you think Mark could be with her?

DIANNE
I hope so.

FOLTRIGG
Where would they go... the two of them together? Huh, what do you think?

DIANNE
Hell, you all are the F.B.I. You find 'em!!!

INT. CAR (OUTER STREETS OF MEMPHIS) - NIGHT

Mark is punching all the buttons on the RADIO.

MARK
You listen to oldies?

Reggie quickly turns OFF the RADIO.

REGGIE
Mark! Get serious! We can't just drive aimlessly about...

MARK
You're doing just fine. Keep drivin' over the bridge.

REGGIE
(sarcastically)
A destination would be nice. What are you thinking about?

MARK
Lots of things. In jail, you can think a lot. What Romey told me, might be true, might not. If it isn't true, I'd be off the hook. If it is true, we'd have a better chance to bargain with the F.B.I., get my mother a new life. They'll give us anything we want.

REGGIE
So...?

MARK
So just head towards Louisiana. We're gonna go to New Orleans, and find Romey's house. That's where the body's supposed to be.

REGGIE
That's the last thing in the whole world I wanted to know.

MARK
You do now.

REGGIE
(laughing)
You're not suggesting that we...

MARK
That we should look for Boyd Boyette's body, and see for ourselves.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Reggie slams the brakes.

REGGIE
Absolutely not. Enough is enough!!

Mark jumps out of the car and starts to hitch as Reggie leaves the car quickly.

EXT. CAR - CONTINUOUS ACTION - FIRST LIGHT OF DAWN

REGGIE
Get back in here! Now I'm the adult...

MARK
Let me go!

REGGIE
Stop it! For once...

MARK
I'm goin' whether you're with me or not! I'll hitchhike if I have to!

REGGIE
Mark! Will you shut up and listen to me? This is too dangerous. It's insane. It could get us killed.

MARK
We're gonna be killed if we don't do anything! You've gotta let me go! Let me go, Reggie!

REGGIE
Just cut a deal with the F.B.I., and we'll be okay...

MARK
We can't trust 'em! You told me that!!!

REGGIE
Mark!

Mark shakes her loose. They both breathe heavily.

REGGIE
Mark, son, client... friend. Why would you want to put your young life on the line like this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARK
Reggie, this is all my fault, God punished me 'cause I stole Mom's cigarettes and took Ricky out in the woods and lied to everybody... An' He punished me by hurtin' Ricky, 'cause I sure wish it was me lyin' there like a vegetable than Ricky, who ain't never done nothin' to nobody... An' when I was at Mama Love's I seen that picture of Jesus in the kitchen with all the kids... an' it says, 'Bring all the children unto me'... and I made a deal that night... I made a deal that if I make all of this right, for Mom and the F.B.I. and do the right thing by everybody ... that Ricky will be okay... I made a deal, Reggie, an' I'm keepin' my part of the bargain if it kills me.

Reggie is so filled with emotion and pride for Mark she has to catch her breath.

REGGIE
You know how to find Romey's house once we get to New Orleans?

EXT. "M" BRIDGE - DAWN

Reggie and Mark drive toward Louisiana.

INT. JOHNNY SULARI'S OFFICE - DAY

Muldanno stands before Sulari, alone.

SULARI
You want me to bring Gronke and Bono back from Memphis to help you dig up Boyette's body and dispose of it properly?

MULDANNO
Yes, Uncle Johnny.

SURLARI
Which you should of done in the first place...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MULDANNO
The kid knows where it is, and he's disappeared. Who knows what he's doing? It's just too risky. We gotta move the body, I need your help, Uncle Johnny.

SULARI
Of course you need help. You've done a very stupid thing again, and now you need me to rescue you again.

MULDANNO
It concerns all of us, I think.

SULARI
Is that a threat, Barry? I don't take kindly to threats, Barry. I want you to know, that I will not let you take me or anyone else in the family down with you. Do you understand? You may force me to take action as well. Ironic, isn't it? You and the boy both have something in common. You both know too much.

MULDANNO
I'm begging you, Uncle Johnny. Just help me now, and I'll never make another mistake again.

SULARI
This is my last favor, Barry.

MULDANNO
Thank you, Uncle Johnny.

SULARI
You understand what I mean when I say my last favor.

MULDANNO
I understand, Uncle Johnny.

EXT. RAMADA INN (OUTSIDE NEW ORLEANS) - DUSK

An ordinary motel near the airport.

INT. ROOM

Mark and Reggie have bought some sweats which they have changed into.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They also collect a street map, flashlight, etc.

REGGIE
Ready... ?

MARK
Ready.

INT. MCTHUNE'S OFFICE - DUSK

McThune slams the phone down.

MCTHUNE
Hot damn!

Fink and a couple other agents look up.

MCTHUNE
We just listened in on a phone call from Clint Van Hooser to Dianne Sway at the hospital. He told her he had just talked to Reggie, that she and Mark were in New Orleans, and everything was fine.

FINK
New Orleans!?

MCTHUNE
That's what he said. No indication exactly where, just New Orleans.

FINK
Let's tell Foltrigg.

EXT. SHADY STREET (SUBURB OF NEW ORLEANS) - NIGHT

Reggie and Mark drive up to the side of the quiet road.

INT. REGGIE'S CAR

Reggie drives slowly while Mark beams a flashlight onto a map.

MARK
... it should be the one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REGGIE
(as she turns)
1216, 1218... so it's on the right side, should be either this one or -- there it is.

The headlights illuminate a mailbox with the numbers "1214" and, in smaller letters, "CLIFFORD."

MARK
Can you see the boathouse?

REGGIE
No boathouse.

Mark can't take his eyes off of Jerome Clifford's property.

MARK
Romey told me that Barry the Blade hid the Senator's body 'under his boat' in his boathouse.

REGGIE
On his own property, how insane.

MARK
Romey said Barry the Blade was in a hurry. He took the body to his house, and buried it in concrete under the boat.

REGGIE
I can't see a boathouse.

Mark opens his door.

MARK
Well, let's go and see.

Reggie quickly leans over Mark, and shuts the door.

REGGIE
Don't be crazy! Who knows who could see us! We have to be careful. There's a lake and some woods -- let's park back there.

EXT. DOCKS (NEW ORLEANS) - NIGHT

Barry the Blade, Bono, and Gronke walk towards a car that sits alone on a dock. The men are carrying shovels and pick axes. Gronke is sneezing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They get into the car, START the ENGINE, and spin off onto the street.

EXT. WOODS BEHIND JEROME CLIFFORD'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Through the thick, swampy woods creep Reggie and Mark. The woods are next to the river.

REGGIE
It's so dark, I can barely see.

They reach a group of trees that line the back yards of the cluster of homes that include Clifford's house.

Mark and Reggie crouch down.

REGGIE
That's Clifford's house, down there.

With his eys, Mark follows the line of Clifford's property, and sees that it leads down to the river. Situated on the river is a rustic-looking boathouse.

MARK
Reggie look! That's Romey's boathouse!

Reggie squints, and surveys the boathouse.

REGGIE
Yeah.

MARK
It's gotta be. Let's go.

REGGIE
Careful, Mark! We don't want to be arrested for trespassing!

Between Mark and Reggie's vantage point and Romey's boathouse lies another piece of property, a home belonging to a Mr. Ballentine. In order to get to Romey's boathouse, they must run across Ballentine's property. There are "NO TRESPASSING - ARMED RESPONSE" signs posted about.

Reggie and Mark scamper across the back lawn of the Ballentines' residence. In the lighted windows of the house, Mark can see MR. BALLENTINE, a fat old man, pouring himself a glass of chocolate milk in his kitchen.

REGGIE
For God's sake, let's not set off any alarms.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mark and Reggie try to creep behind shrubs and trees, past Ballentine's house, until they reach Clifford's property and the boathouse.

Mark silently dashes down towards the boathouse. Reggie tries to keep up with him.

REGGIE
(whispering desperately)
Mark! Mark, hold on!

She catches up to him, and holds him back.

REGGIE
Mark!

MARK
Come on, Reggie!

Reggie gets a good look at the boathouse. It's old, big, foreboding. She can see a big lock on the doors.

REGGIE
It's locked! Jesus, just slow down, and let's think about this.

MARK
We can break the lock!

REGGIE
We can't wake up half the neighborhood!

Mark walks up to the boathouse, and pulls at the lock, he tries the doors. They won't budge.

Reggie tries a smaller side-door. Also padlocked. They whisper.

REGGIE
Now what?

Mark glances up, sees a high window open so that only a child could crawl in. He points to a spot under the window.

MARK
Stand over there and make a step.

Mark laces his fingers together, palms up.

MARK
Make a <u>step</u>. I'm gonna climb on your shoulders.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Reggie's face says, "Oh, Jesus," but she does it. Mark drops the flashlight inside his shirt, puts a foot in her palms, then manages to clamber up onto her shoulders. Reggie staggers a bit but is able to hold his weight. Mark works with the WINDOW, grunts a bit, and yes, the thing gives way and pulls wide, making a LOUD CREAKING noise as it swings open.

Immediately, Mark is climbing inside.

REGGIE
Mark, wait...

But he's inside. Reggie flattens herself against the wall, looking hard at the neighbor's house surrounded by chain-link fence and alarm system signs. Silence.

INT. BOATHOUSE

The structure is surprisingly big. Mark dangles from a three-inch wide rafter that runs across the boathouse, then drops down onto a gravel floor. The full moon shines through the window, giving us some light. Mark switches the flashlight on low and we see...

Spiderwebs everywhere, covering rusted patio furniture, stacks of newpapers and, oddly, huge bunches of wire coathangers bound together. The boat itself -- a large, sixteen-foot outboard ski rig sits in the exact middle of the space.

Layers of junk are piled against the boat: Sacks of aluminum cans, garden tools, old tires, etc. Being as quiet as he can, Mark lifts a tire away from the boat.

EXT. BOATHOUSE - SAME TIME

Reggie stiffens as she hears MALE VOICES. Where are the voices coming from? Where's the source? And suddenly she sees three shadows, and oh, Christ, they're walking straight down the driveway toward the boathouse.

INT. BOATHOUSE - SAME TIME

Mark is on the floor, which is slanted down and leads to the murky water. The boathouse is dark and eerie.

He crouches under the boat, and examines the concrete. which was poured hastily, and looks like something could be underneath.

EXT. BOATHOUSE

Reggie freaking.

REGGIE
(frantic whisper)
Mark! Mark! Somebody's coming.

The shadows are closer. What can she do? She gives one rap on the wall -- as hard as she dares -- and fades back into the weeds.

INT. BOATHOUSE

Mark freaking.

EXT. FRONT OF BOATHOUSE

Closer to us, we see that the shadows are Barry, Gronke and Bono carrying hammers and chisels. They also speak in whispers.

BONO
You got a key?

Barry, his face strained, SHOOTS the lock TWICE with his SILENCER PISTOL, a SOFT THUNK, THUNK, and the padlock falls away. The three men stop as a MUTED CLATTER comes from within the boathouse.

INT. BOATHOUSE

Mark leaps onto the side of the boat. He lifts himself up and over the side of the boat, and hides under a sheet of canvas.

EXT. BOATHOUSE - ANGLE ON REGGIE

who is rigid, absolutely frozen as she watches the three men draw guns and enter the boathouse, closing the door behind them.

INT. BOATHOUSE - SAME TIME

Moonlight still streams through the window, and the two thugs have produced flashlights with which they search the interior of the boathouse. Everything looks exactly as it had before: The tire and the sack of cans lean against the boat precisely as they did before Mark touched anything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRY
I know I heard something.

GRONKE
Maybe a cat?

Barry doesn't answer him. He flashes the light around the boathouse one more time, but sees nothing and moves to the boat. The three men quickly push away the junk and roll the boat off its spot. Barry scrapes away two inches of gravel with a shovel quickly hitting the concrete. He puts down the shovel and he and both of the other men picks up hammers and chisels and begin to CHINK away. As the three work --

INT. BOAT

Mark lowers himself down into the darkness of the boat even some more. In the shadows, he looks around. He looks down towards the boat's stern. He can see, through the edge of the canvas sheet boat cover, that the large doors to the boathouse have been left open by the thugs.

Mark thinks, and begins to creep his way under the canvas to his escape route. One sound and he's dead.

Mark has reached the edge of the boat, and lifts the canvas up. He is about two feet from the open doors. It is very dark, and the men have all their flashlight beams aimed down at the cement.

Mark carefully climbs out over the end of the boat, and uses the motor and propeller as a means of lowering himself down onto the ground, quietly.

EXT. BOATHOUSE - SAME TIME

Reggie crouches where we saw her before. She's in a classic double bind: She's frightened, wants to run, yet she's even more concerned about Mark. So she's caught there.

INT. BOATHOUSE

The men continue to pick away at the cement.

Mark runs out the doors of the boathouse.

EXT. BOATHOUSE - SAME TIME

Mark scurries silently into the yard.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

From behind the bush, Reggie frantically waves to him.

Mark sees her, and runs over.

They hug, both scared to the marrow of their bones.

REGGIE
Mark! We're getting the hell outta here!

MARK
We can't! They're gonna take the body.

REGGIE
But, Mark, they're killers! These are Mafia people! We've got to get outta here and think of something else to do!

MARK
If we let them take the body, we're dead!

REGGIE
If we stay, we're dead. Let's go. They beat us. It's all over. They win.

MARK
Quitter!!!

REGGIE
Mark...

MARK
No wonder your kids left you... You're a quitter!!!

This is the worst thing anyone could ever say to her. Her silent rage is so staggering that even Mark is scared. Reggie picks up a large rock.

Mark is perplexed, not knowing what she could possibly do.

Reggie holds the rock up in the air. Then suddenly, she swings the rock with all her might into the air, and it sails through the night.

Mark and Reggie watch the rock hurl towards the Ballentines' house, towards a large bay window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The rock SMASHES through the WINDOW of the elegant house, and all of a sudden all hell breaks loose. The ALARM SYSTEM goes bananas. Lights flash on, ALARMS BLARE.

Mark and Reggie hit the ground, in shock. Mark grabs Reggie tight. They hide in the shadows, behind a clump of weeds.

INT. CLIFFORD'S BOATHOUSE - SAME TIME

The three goons stop their work.

BONO
What in Christ's name is going on?

The three men look at each other in panic, and suddenly throw all their tools up over into the boat, and cover them with the canvas. They take some trash, and spill it over the hole in the cement, hiding it.

Bono and Gronke run up to the door, brandishing their pistols, and look out into the yard. The sound of the ALARM is almost DEAFENING.

EXT. BALLANTINE HOUSE - SAME TIME

In his underwear, fat old Mr. Ballantine comes running out of his house with a shotgun.

BALLENTINE
You sons of bitches! Where the hell are you? Come here, man to man!

INT. BOATHOUSE - SAME TIME

BONO
Christ! We gotta make a run for it. There'll be cops here any minute!

The three men run out into the yard, heading up towards the driveway.

EXT. BACK YARDS

Ballentine can see figures running around on Clifford's residence.

BALLENTINE
Sons of bitches!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ballentine FIRES a BLAST blindly over towards the three goons.

Barry, Bono, and Gronke hit the dust, and scramble to take cover. They fan out, running in all directions.

BALLENTINE
I's sees ya! You snakes!

He FIRES another LOAD into the darkness.

BONO
Jesus!

Bono scrambles in the shadows, and runs precariously near Reggie and Mark's hiding place.

Reggie and Mark see him, crouch down, barely escaping being caught.

Ballentine SHOOTS again.

Barry sees Ballentine, and from across the yard, begins to SHOOT a ROUND from his PISTOL.

A bullet barely misses Ballentine's head, and Ballentine screams. He ducks back through the sliding doors of his kitchen, where his wife is screaming.

Bono takes this opportunity to run back into Clifford's yard, and runs back up to the driveway.

Reggie and Mark can hear their CAR START UP, and SWERVE away, into the street, and take off.

They are alone once more. The ALARM is still BLARING. Reggie and Mark look at each other, breathing heavily from the excitement.

Mark begins to smile.

MARK
You... you are a genius.

REGGIE
Quick, before the cops come.

INT. BOATHOUSE

Quickly, Reggie and Mark begin to clear the trash away, revealing the broken cement.

Under the cement, lies something wrapped in black plastic.

CONTINUED:

Mark clears the last bit of trash away, and holds the flashlight close to the black plastic.

Mark and Reggie look at each other.

MARK
Should I?

Reggie doesn't say anything.

Mark reaches down, and grabs the black plastic. He begins to stretch it away from the cement, until it rips.

Mark bolts upright in horror, and is staring squarely into the face of the late Senator Boyd Boyette.

The two of them look at the dead man, who looks like he is in pain, and is screaming out for help.

Reggie begins to fall backwards. Mark catches her.

REGGIE
I... I'm sorry.

They hear POLICE SIRENS.

MARK
Quick.

They cover the body quickly and make a fast getaway.

INT. RAMADA INN COFFEE SHOP (NEW ORLEANS) - DAWN

Foltrigg and Trumann rush into the shop. The place is empty except for Reggie, who stands at a window. The two stand beside her. Foltrigg makes a gesture toward a booth -- "Do you want to sit?" but Reggie ignores it.

REGGIE
(to Foltrigg)
Are you two alone?
(as Foltrigg nods)
Is that the truth?
(as he nods again, she points to Trumann)
Well, have him trot out to one of those cars that aren't in the parking lot and bring back a pencil and paper from one of those agents that aren't there.

Foltrigg hesitates, but signals for Trumann to do just that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FOLTRIGG
You really saw the body?

REGGIE
Smelled it, too.
(hands him a piece of paper)
... Three psychiatric hospitals that specialize in children.
(a beat)
Call all three, get a bed in one of them for Ricky Sway by noon today.

FOLTRIGG
(same old courtly bullshit)
Well now, Ms. Love, I'm not sure you're in such a strong bargaining position as you think. If you know where the body is, just tell me. It's illegal to --

REGGIE
(interrupting: fierce, fierce)
Listen, damn you, I will get up and walk out of here!

She slaps a nearby table so hard that the SILVERWARE RATTLES.

REGGIE
Do you hear me? You do not bargain with me or my client! Your job is to listen and to nod your head or I'll see to it that you never find that body and never put your ass in the governor's chair. Clear?
(as he hesitates)
Clear?

Foltrigg struggles with his temper, and suddenly -- we see the moment -- drops all the fake your-turn-to-curtsy-my-turn-to-bow crap. He nods.

REGGIE
Good. Now, did you fly here in a private jet?
(as he nods again)
How many does it seat?

FOLTRIGG
Twelve.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REGGIE
Good. Send it back to Memphis right now. I want you to pick up Diane and Ricky Sway, along with his doctor. We'll meet them at the airport and when Mark is safely on board and the plane's in the air, then I'll tell you where the body is.
(a beat)
How about it so far?

FOLTRIGG
I don't hear anything I can't live with.

Trumann hurries back in with pen and paper.

FOLTRIGG
(to Trumann)
Call these places, find a bed for Ricky Sway, now, and send the plane back to Memphis to pick up Diane and Ricky Sway.

Trumann nods, turns and leaves again. Foltrigg has the ballpoint and paper.

REGGIE
Ready? Here we go: the whole family enters the Federal Witness Protection Program. First they pick the hospital and when Ricky's better, they pick the city.

FOLTRIGG
(writing)
Agreed.

REGGIE
Complete change of identification, and a nice little house.
(new tone)
With a walk-in closet, okay?
(as Foltrigg nods, "sure, sure")
No, write that down: Walk-in closet.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REGGIE (CONT'D)
(as he does so)
And since this woman needs to stay home and raise her kids for a while, I'd suggest a monthly allowance of four thousand dollars, guaranteed for four years. Plus an initial outlay of twenty-five thousand to cover what they lost in the fire.

FOLTRIGG
Keep talking.

Foltrigg is having a hell of a time writing all this while standing up. Reggie takes pity on him, sits at a nearby table. Foltrigg also sits, still writing.

REGGIE
If Diane ever wants to go back to work, a cushy government job.

FOLTRIGG
We've got plenty of those.

REGGIE
She'll need a car.

FOLTRIGG
She'll get one.

REGGIE
Ricky may need extended treatment.

FOLTRIGG
We'll cover it.

REGGIE
Have that typed up and we'll all sign it and it'll be happily ever after time for all of us.

Foltrigg is out of the booth and headed for the door before she's stopped talking. He stops, though, and comes back to the table.

FOLTRIGG
Give me some idea: how far's the body from here?

REGGIE
Twelve minutes by the clock.

Foltrigg's eyes light up and he hurries away.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - EARLY MORNING

Dianne Sway, her arms folded protectively over her chest, stares at McThune, Clint, and Dr. Greenway. Harry Roosevelt, in fishing gear, presides.

DIANNE
(soft)
... it's all so confusing. My Goddamn head is splitting. We just get on a plane and fly off forever?

McTHUNE
Since Mark's decided to talk, it's the best thing.

ROOSEVELT
But only if you want to do it, Dianne.

DIANNE
I want to talk to Mark.

McTHUNE
You can talk to him in New Orleans.

ROOSEVELT
If you can change his mind, the deal's off. Reggie's not dropping the big news 'til you guys are on the plane and in the air.

DIANNE
(hesitant; then)
All right.

McThune races out.

INT. ST. PETER'S - GROUND FLOOR

... as FBI agents hold three of the four elevators on the ground floor.

NINTH FLOOR WAITING ROOM

... as FBI agents unceremoniously hustle a few people out.

NINTH FLOOR NURSES' STATION

... as ten agents hold the nurses at their station and secure the entire ninth floor.

NINTH FLOOR HALLWAY

... as the door to 934 opens and Greenway, McThune, and Clint exit rapidly, pushing Ricky's gurney. Dianne jogs along. Karen breaks free and embraces Dianne tearfully.

INT. NINTH FLOOR ELEVATOR

... as the three enter with Ricky's gurney, and McThune pushes floor button fifteen.

INT. HALLWAY - FIFTEENTH FLOOR

... as the three push Ricky's gurney out of the hallway and down a short passage and through a metal door...

EXT. ROOF

... where a helicopter waits, its blades already turning. Ricky is loaded, the three clamber aboard and the helicopter ascends.

EXT. AIRPORT - MORNING

A half-dozen agents run forward as the helicopter lands and Ricky is unloaded, rolled toward the waiting private jet.

INT. JOHNNY SULARI'S OFFICE - LATER THAT DAY

Barry rages in front of Sulari, pointing to Gronke and Bono.

MULDANNO
They screwed up! You shit heads! You never walk away! Never! I told them not to run!

SULARI
Now settle down, Johnny. They did the right thing by walking away. Sometimes in life, it's what you've gotta do. Sometimes you've gotta walk away in order to survive. It's what you should have done in the first place, Barry. You should've walked away. Then this whole goddamn mess would never have happened.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MULDANNO
I'll dig out the body myself. Let me take care of it. It's not too late.

Johnny rises, and takes Muldanno by the shoulders.

SULARI
You don't know what you're saying. You're excited. Why don't you let Gronke here drive you? You can take Bono for company. You can all go together for a nice drive.

Muldanno gulps.

MULDANNO
No, Uncle Johnny. No. I'd rather do it on my own.

SULARI
And run the risk of getting caught? No more risks, Barry. Barry the Blade. No more risks.

Johnny Sulari stands, and walks over to Barry. He takes Muldanno's face in both hands, and plants a kiss on his lips. The Mafia kiss of death.

SULARI
Now offs with the bunch of yous guys, huh?

Tears come to Muldanno's eyes as he looks at Gronke and Bono. Muldanno can see how glad Gronke and Bono are to do what they are about to do.

Everyone gets up, lead Barry the Blad Muldanno out of the office.

INT. REGGIE AND MARK'S MOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Reggie and Mark and Trumann all jump nervously as the TELEPHONE RINGS. Reggie answers, listens, hangs up.

REGGIE
They're in the air.
(to Trumann)
Put a couple of your boys near the intersection of St. Charles and Toledano.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRUMANN
(exiting)
Done and done.

As Truman exits, Boxx enters, the newly-typed agreement in his hand. He gives it to Reggie, who scans it, then signs.

REGGIE
(to Mark)
Let's go to the airport.

Boxx exits, Reggie heads toward the door, but stops at the doorway when she realizes Mark isn't following her.

REGGIE
What's wrong?

MARK
Nothing.

REGGIE
Well, let's go then.
(when Mark still doesn't move)
What is it? Have you changed your mind about talking?

MARK
No.

REGGIE
Then what?
(as he hesitates)
You can tell me.

MARK
I never flew before...

REGGIE
You fought off that guy in the morgue, you stood up to being thrown in jail, you faced up to Barry the Blade... I give you my word you'll survive the plane ride.

EXT. AIRPLANE HANGAR - DAY

The hangar is a quarter mile from the main terminal, one of a row of identical buildings. The words "GULF AIR" are painted in orange letters above the tall double doors.

CONTINUED:

FBI agents are everywhere, but they keep their distance from Reggie and Mark, who stand scanning the sky. Foltrigg and Trumann arrive, move to Reggie and Mark as the plane appears.

It stops a hundred feet away, the door opens, and the stairs hit the ground. Dianne appears, followed by Dr. Greenway and Clint. Dianne runs to meet Mark.

MARK
Mom!

Dianne runs to Mark, and they hug each other tight.

MARK
Mom! I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry.

Reggie watches them.

Dianne stands up, and walks over to Reggie. They look at each other.

REGGIE
I'm glad you came.

DIANNE
Didn't have much of a choice.

REGGIE
You do now. You can turn this off if you want, but they have a bed for Ricky in a wonderful children's hospital in Arizona.

DIANNE
So we're going to live in Phoenix?

MARK
Only 'til Ricky's better. Then we can go anywhere we want -- Canada, Connecticut, anywhere.

Dianne takes a deep breath, and slowly a smile spreads across her face.

DIANNE
They told me we'd have a real house...

REGGIE
With a walk-in closet.

DIANNE
And some getting-started money?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REGGIE
That's right.

DIANNE
And later, maybe a good job?

REGGIE
In the bag.

DIANNE
... no more cheap trailers. No more lamp factory. No more worryin' about bills. I could watch my boys grow up, maybe join the P.T.A.
(focuses)
I'm only twenty-seven years old!

REGGIE
I think you're due for a break.

DIANNE
Have a little faith, baby, I guess we're goin' to Phoenix.

Reggie gestures to Foltrigg, who comes on the run, holding the agreement, which Dianne signs.

TRUMANN
(yells)
Get the plane ready!

Two agents jump to let the pilot know, and Reggie and Dianne shake hands, then give each other a brief hug. Then -- and everybody's happy now -- Dianne and Mark and two agents start toward the plane. About halfway there, though, Mark's face suddenly clouds as he realizes something's wrong: Reggie isn't walking toward the plane with them.

He turns, starts back toward her. She meets him halfway.

MARK
You can't come with us, can you?

Reggie's eyes begin to water.

REGGIE
I can't, Mark. Once you go into the witness program, all ties are severed.

Mark stands there as he fights tears back.

CONTINUED:

MARK
I'm sorry about all this. You didn't deserve it.

REGGIE
But if it hadn't happened, Mark, I never would've met you.

She fights back tears also. They both cry, and Mark runs into Reggie's arms. She kisses him on the cheek, and holds him tight.

MARK
I'll never see you again, will I?

His lips quiver and tears run down his chin. Reggie would like to lie, to save his feelings, but she breaks down, grits her teeth.

REGGIE
No, Mark.

They hug once more, and then Mark begins to head up the stairs onto the plane.

REGGIE
I love you, Mark. I'll miss you.

Mark climbs up the stairs, and gets into the plane.

McThune runs up behind him, and Reggie sees the stairs fold away, and the door closes behind them.

Foltrigg walks up next to Reggie as the plane begins to taxi towards the end of the runway.

Clint joins them, and eases his hand into Reggie's.

Reggie wipes the tears from her cheeks.

REGGIE
I think I'll become a real estate lawyer. I can't take any more of this. It hurts, Clint.

CLINT
He's quite a kid.

REGGIE
Remarkable. He thinks like a terrorist and cries like a child.

CLINT
He is a child.

REGGIE
I know, but don't tell him, it'll just upset him.

They see the plane take off and head up to the clouds.

Reggie turns to Foltrigg.

REGGIE
The body is in the boathouse behind Jerome Clifford's house. 1214 East Brookline.

FOLTRIGG
You're a good man, Ms. Love.

REGGIE
It's Reggie.

FOLTRIGG
Thank you, Reggie.

REGGIE
Don't thank me. Thank Mark.

They watch the plane disappear in the clouds.

INT. PLANE - SUNSET

Dianne deals with Trumann and Greenway. Mark sits next to Ricky. He sees the ground disappear into the distance. Reggie disappears with it. He fights back tears when suddenly...

RICKY (O.S.)
Markey?

Mark turns and sees his brother, awake and looking at him.

MARK
Ricky?

RICKY
Hey, Markey... got a cigarette?

FADE OUT.

THE END